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VARIOUS VIEWS

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BY

WILLIAM MORTON PAYNE

CHICAGO
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1902

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TO

PAUL SHOREY

WITH

THIRTY YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP

PREFACE.

THIS book is a companion volume to 'Little Leaders' and 'Editorial Echoes.' Like its predecessors, it is made up of thirty leading articles written for 'The Dial' during recent years. A few inconsiderable changes in the original text have been made, but the papers remain substantially what they were when first printed, and even the conventional editorial style has been retained. The miscellaneous character of the papers here brought together has made impossible the threefold classification of the earlier volumes, although a rough grouping according to subject-matter has been attempted. It will be found, however, that, as before, the writer has been chiefly preoccupied with themes suggested by the broader aspects of literary history and criticism.

CHICAGO, October 1, 1902.

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THE HUGO CENTENARY.

SEVENTEEN years ago, the death of Victor Hugo, at the age of eighty-three, plunged into mourning the whole civilized world. At Goethe's age, and Voltaire's, within a few months, he entered into rest, and of all the great men of European letters since Shakespeare, those two alone seemed worthy to be named with him. For more than half a century, his rank had been preëminent, not among French writers alone, but among those of the whole world, and his venerable declining years had been crowned with such glory as is won by few indeed among the sons of men. His genius had so dominated the century which it illustrated that it seemed as if history must henceforth remember the period by his name, and speak of the Age of Hugo as it speaks of the Age of Dante or the Age of Shakespeare.

Now that the years of Victor Hugo's life, added to the years that have elapsed since his death, have made up the full sum of one hun-

dred, and men touched with his spirit and inspired by his message are engaged — not alone in the country that has the first claim upon his memory — in recalling his splendid services to humanity and his priceless contributions to the treasury of that literature which has the breath of life everlasting, — now that the centennial year of his birth has been reached, it becomes pertinent to ask how time has dealt with his reputation, and how strong is still the hold of his works upon the artistic sense and the conscience of the generation that has come after him. The final appraisal is not yet possible, nor will it be for perhaps a hundred years to come, but some things may now be said that our posterity will not be likely to repudiate. For it must be remembered that Hugo's work has been tested by the apparatus of the critic during a much longer period than the term of years that he has been in his grave. It is now three-quarters of a century since the famous pronunciamento of 'Cromwell' was delivered, and it is nearly as long since the pitched battle between the romanticists and classicists that was occasioned by the *première* of 'Hernani.' During all that time, the genius of

Hugo has been hotly championed by some, and bitterly assailed by others. When he died, detraction had already done its worst upon him, and his fame had emerged well-nigh untarnished from the smoke of the critical conflict. Since 1885, his assailants have found nothing to say of him so severe as what was said long before that date, and the recognition of his finer qualities — always admitted by those who dealt with him the most roughly — has been less grudgingly admitted even by those who have felt bound to enter their caveat against his acceptance as one of the great figures in the history of literature.

We have observed with close attention the currents and counter-currents of recent opinion concerning Hugo's work, and it seems to us that there has gradually shaped itself, in the consciousness of his own compatriots as well as in the consciousness of the cosmopolitan tribunal of letters, an image of the poet that looms larger and larger as the age recedes from him, an image so colossal that it dwarfs all others of his world-contemporaries in the retrospective vision. Can we as Englishmen, great as must be our reverence for the memories of Shelley and Words-

worth and Tennyson, of Carlyle and Ruskin and Emerson, can we in fairness claim that any of these men matches Hugo in artistic and moral stature? Can a German make the claim for Heine, can an Italian make it for Signor Carducci, can a Russian make it for Tourguénieff, can a Norwegian make it for Dr. Ibsen? Can a Frenchman fairly make it for Musset or Balzac or Renan? To ask these questions, it seems to us, is to make it clear that negative answers are the only possible ones. Certain aspects of the genius of these other men may appeal to us more deeply, or strike more responsive chords in our consciousness, but the noblest personality of them all, with the sum total of its achievement, set beside the personality and the achievement of Hugo, must suffer in the comparison. 'The spiritual sovereign of the nineteenth century,' Mr. Swinburne calls him, and, whatever critical reservations we may make upon this point or upon that, it seems that the ascription is still the just due of the great poet, novelist, and dramatist whose writings have now been steadily pouring from the press for a period of nearly eighty years.

Against this secular canonization of the poet

the devil's advocate has advanced three main charges. The first is that, while parading omniscience, he is guilty of gross inaccuracies of scholarship and grotesque perversions of the truth. This charge may fairly be allowed. 'L'Homme Qui Rit,' for example, is a romance *pour rire* as far as its background of historical fact is concerned. 'Notre Dame de Paris,' with its 'deux tours de granit faites par Charlemagne,' is not in much better case, although its subject is the history of the poet's own country. In short, the story of Hugo's blunders is as lengthy as it is amusing. The second charge is that he is a rhetorician, who cultivated a turgid, bombastic, and sensational manner of composition, instead of following in the footsteps of the great masters of style. This charge has a qualified truth, although it reduces for the most part to the complaint which the classicist always makes of the romanticist, and begs the deeper question which is really at issue. And if 'Hernani,' for example, is rhetoric rather than poetry, as perhaps it is, what splendid rhetoric it offers its readers! When before in the French drama were 'points' ever made with

such telling effect as in this melodramatic invention! 'Vous n'allez pas au fond,' 'Couvrons nous, grands d'Espagne,' 'Dieu! je suis exaucée,' 'J'en passe, et des meilleurs,' — how the examples crowd upon the memory! It may be rhetoric, but the emotions which it arouses are not readily to be distinguished from those which we experience from the purest tragic poetry.

Concerning the third charge, which makes the poet out as a person of unbounded egotism and colossal self-esteem, it may be admitted that Hugo frequently spoke of himself in terms that his truest friends might wish had been left to others to formulate. Yet modesty and self-effacement are virtues that may be carried too far, and in Hugo's case their assumption would have been a hypocritical affectation. The prophet *must* be self-conscious, else he is no prophet; he must have an exalted sense of his mission, and a fervent belief in the truth of his message. And if any nineteenth century utterance may be called prophetic, it was surely that of the man who proclaimed that

> 'Le poète, en des jours impies,
> Vient préparer des jours meilleurs,'

and whose faith in the sacredness of his calling did not waver to the end. Posterity never condemns a man for taking the true measure of himself, even if that measure be a large one; it is only to his contemporaries, and during the period when his true dimensions are the subject of controversy, that such self-appraisal seems an act of questionable taste. When we read of Shakespeare declaring that his rhyme shall outlive 'the gilded monuments of princes,' or of Dante saying, with magnificent arrogance, — the question being of an important embassy, — 'S'io vo, chi sta; s'io sto, chi va?' we applaud rather than condemn, we admire rather than deride, the absolute conviction of the phrase. Posterity has accepted these men at their own estimates; it is more than possible that posterity may accept Hugo at his own estimate.

There are spots upon the sun — this is about the substance of what unsympathetic criticism discovers in its examination of the work of Victor Hugo. But those who all their lives have bathed in the sunlight, and felt its vivifying warmth, are content to be simply grateful, and will not, for knowledge of the sun-spots, declare the moon

to be a more satisfactory orb. The positive achievement of Hugo is so immense that a volume would be needed for the barest summary. Leaving aside his miscellaneous prose, descriptive, fanciful, speculative, critical, and political, there remain the three great categories of strictly creative work, poetry, romance, and drama. This seems to be the order in which they will eventually stand, the order in which serious criticism has already placed them. To the creator of 'Hernani,' 'Ruy Blas,' and 'Marion Delorme,' we must give the credit of accomplishing the romantic revolution in French dramatic art. To the creator of 'Notre Dame de Paris,' 'Les Misérables,' and 'Quatre-vingt-treize,' we must give the credit of promulgating a new conception of the teachings of history and a new gospel of social solidarity. To the creator of 'Les Contemplations,' 'Les Châtiments,' and 'La Légende des Siècles' we must give the credit of first revealing the full singing possibilities of the French language, of rising to such a height of lyric expression as had been attained by no French poet before, of crowning the splendid edifice of French literature with its supreme

revelation of pinnacled beauty. In this lyrical domain Hugo out-sang all the other poets of his age, and most of the poets of all ages; he rose as upon the pinions of the eagle, and matched the richness of Pindar; he soared as with the skylark's wings, and matched the pure note of Shelley. When at the height of his inspiration, he poured forth strains of everlasting melody, which were yet linked in thought with the noblest aspirations of the human spirit; for his genius, while ever striving after the beautiful, never forgot its allegiance to the true and the good — to the other aspects of what must ever remain the triune ideal of the soul of man.

One thing more must be said to round out this commemorative tribute to the poet whose centenary is now at hand. Of another great poet it has been written:

> 'It is indeed
> Forever well our singers should
> Utter good words and know them good
> Not through song only; with close heed
> Lest, having spent for the work's sake
> Six days, the man be left to make.'

It is 'not through song only' that we love and cherish the memory of Victor Hugo. To the

man also our tribute is due — the man who spoke brave words for freedom when such words were most needed, the man who, at the sacrifice of all that was dear to him, translated into action the faith that was his, and made his protest against tyranny doubly eloquent by his example. One of the most grudging of his English critics is inspired to enthusiasm by the contemplation of the chief act in Hugo's life, and writes of it in terms of such admiration that we can suggest nothing to add. 'The great fact remains. M. Hugo, in scorn of amnesties and invitations, lived out nineteen years of exile; his voice did not fail nor his heart falter; he stood on his rock in the free British seas, like Elijah on Carmel, spokesman and champion of all those who had not bowed the knee to Baal.' The example is one for all time and for all men. Only one man in a century may embody his protest against wrong in a volume of 'Châtiments,' but every man may have the strength of purpose to stand for what he believes to be the right, whatever the forces that are leagued against him. In these lax days of service to the spirit of compromise, there is no lesson more needed than

that of Victor Hugo's 'Ultima Verba' — those words which seemed futile enough at the time of their deliverance, but which, in the light of subsequent history, are seen to have been the very sign and seal of the poet's prophetic function.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

'I WAS born,' says Alexandre Dumas, 'at Villers-Cotterets, a little town in the department of the Aisne, on the Paris road, about two hundred paces from the Rue de la Noue, where Demoustiers died, two leagues from La Ferté-Milon, where Racine was born, and seven leagues from Château-Thierry, where La Fontaine first saw the light. I was born on July 24, 1802, at half-past five in the morning, in the Rue de Lormet, in a house which now belongs to my friend Cartier, who would gladly sell it to me any day, so that I may be able to die in the very room where I was born.' As a matter of fact, he never did buy the house, but died, December 5, 1870, in a little town near Dieppe, whither he had been carried from Paris by his devoted son, on the eve of the German investment of the Capital, in order that his last days might be spared the privations of the siege. Something more than a year later, when his

country was again at peace, his remains received final interment in his native town, in the presence of a famous following of authors, artists, and actors.

The bit of autobiography above quoted is characteristic at once of the geniality and the egotism of the man who wrote it. It quite takes for granted the reader's interest in every slightest personal particular that the writer may see fit to impart; it takes also for granted the reader's acceptance of the fact that neither Racine nor La Fontaine could possibly shed any greater lustre upon the region of their common birth than was shed by the author of 'Monte Cristo' and 'Les Trois Mousquetaires.' Of his own greatness, indeed, Alexandre Dumas retained an unshaken conviction throughout his long career. At the height of that career, he could assert with perfect self-assurance that for a quarter of a century past three men, Hugo, Lamartine, and himself, had remained at the head of contemporary French literature; our only marvel is that he should not have set his own name first in that trinity of literary fame. We are not of those to whom such assertions are always and necessarily

amusing. They may express the proud self-consciousness of genius, or they may merely indicate a remarkable capacity for self-deception. When Dante and Shakespeare state what we know to be the simple truth concerning their own work, we applaud rather than rebuke, holding such frank utterance in higher esteem than any exhibition of mock modesty. But in the case of Dumas the effect of such self-assertion is on the whole, an entertaining illustration of the delusion of the egotist. That he was a great writer in the sense in which Hugo was a great writer is, of course, a preposterous notion; and that he should honestly have ranked himself with his most illustrious contemporary shows only the fact that his critical faculty, weak in any case, was absolutely incapable of taking the measure of his own work.

Although a writer of only the second rank, Dumas looms up astonishingly in the French literature of the last century, and he still holds his own surprisingly well. In some respects his position is better to-day than it was at any time during his life. His enemies did their worst to break down his reputation while he was still

alive; after his death, there was nothing more to be urged against him than had already been urged, and his fame did not suffer the reaction that commonly follows upon the death of a great writer. Dumas was never set upon such a pinnacle as Hugo in the esteem of his admiring fellow-countrymen, and hence was never in so perilous a position. He was immensely popular, but he was not revered as a prophet and a sage. He has preserved his popularity at home for a full generation after his death, while abroad he is both better known and better appreciated than he was at any time while alive.

But as far as the English-speaking world is concerned, the vogue, if not the fame, of Dumas seems to have been mainly posthumous. The last generation was inclined to regard with dark suspicion the works of all French novelists, and the romances of Alexandre Dumas were held, mostly by persons who had never read them, to be typically 'French' in their wicked levity, and consequently to be shunned by all righteous-minded readers. When translated into English, the romances were published in such a way as to repel persons of taste, and attract only those

classes of readers to whom literature proper makes no appeal whatever. Well do we remember the big and ugly volumes, badly printed and bound in depressing black, in which form alone the American readers of twenty or thirty years ago might make the acquaintance of d'Artagnan and Monte Cristo. Things are very different now, when tasteful editions abound, when the old-fashioned prejudices have disappeared, and when we have all of us become more or less denizens of the joyous realm of romantic invention which is still ruled by the spirit of Alexandre Dumas.

It was along in the eighties, we should say, that English and American readers of the more discriminating sort came to be attracted in considerable numbers to the romances of Dumas. Before that time, his following had been large but uncritical, — it had been a following made up for the most part of seekers for the sensational in literature, of readers who were satisfied with highly-spiced invention, and who recked little of constructive art. But Dumas really deserved a better fate than the applause of this class of readers, and he received his deserts in due course of

time. It was about twenty years ago that two English critics of undeniable authority gave assurance to timid souls that their enjoyment of the French romancer was quite legitimate, and that the adventures of the three musketeers really belonged to literature. It is, we think, chiefly to Mr. Andrew Lang and Robert Louis Stevenson that the literary rehabilitation of Dumas with the English-speaking public is to be credited, for these men boldly proclaimed what many readers of taste had felt without quite daring to assert. They had coupled in thought the names of Dumas and Scott, but Mr. Lang ventured to make the conjunction on the printed page. Addressing the spirit of the Frenchman, he said:

'Than yours there has been no greater nor more kindly and beneficent force in modern letters. To Scott, indeed, you owed the first impulse of your genius; but, once set in motion, what miracles could it not accomplish? Our dear Porthos was overcome, at last, by a superhuman burden; but your imaginative strength never found a task too great for it. It is good, in a day of small and laborious ingenuities, to breathe the free air of your books, and dwell in the company of Dumas's men —so gallant, so frank, so indomitable, such swordsmen, and such trenchermen.'

This frank and generous praise is echoed by

Stevenson, who, closing his 'Vicomte de Bragelonne' after the fifth perusal, expresses his enthusiastic admiration in a series of queries which are in fact challenges to all disputants.

'What other novel has such epic variety and nobility of incident? Often, if you will, impossible; often of the order of an Arabian story; and yet all based on human nature. For if you come to that, what novel has more human nature? Not studied with the microscope, but seen largely in plain daylight, with the natural eye? What novel has more good sense, and gaiety, and wit, and unflagging, admirable literary skill? . . . And, once more, to make an end of commendations, what novel is inspired with a more unstrained or a more wholesome morality?'

These words take us far indeed from the standpoint of middle-class propriety and narrow puritanical outlook. They mark the larger and saner critical light in which our own generation has come to view the famous literature of the past.

In the presence of such tributes as these, the unlovely aspects of the character of Dumas, and the dubious aspects of his literary methods, sink into relative insignificance. Granted that he was a swaggerer and vainglorious, that petty jealousies and hypocrisies marked many stages of his career, that in his financial relations he held his personal

honor too lightly; granted also that his literary *supercheries* were of unexampled audacity, that he pillaged ideas and situations from all sorts of sources, that he lent his name to books that others had written,—granted all these things, with many others of like tenor, the fact remains that he possessed an astonishingly original and prolific genius, that besides much slipshod writing that has long since been forgotten he produced a series of masterpieces that the world will not willingly let die, and that his higher ideals were on the whole ideals of manliness and clean living and devotion to admirable artistic aims.

Long before Dumas had become popular with English readers, at a time when they thought of him, so far as they thought at all, as of a writer whose stock in trade was a shallow sensationalism and a picturesque perversion of historical happenings, he was known and loved by no less a man than Thackeray, who found no difficulty in rising above English prejudice and contracting a very genuine sympathy for the most gasconading of Frenchmen. This is the language in which Thackeray deals with the vexed matter of collaboration:

'They say that all the works bearing Dumas's name are not written by him. Well? does not the chief cook have *aides* under him? Did not Rubens's pupils paint on his canvases? Had not Lawrence assistants for his backgrounds? For myself, being also *du métier*, I confess I would often like to have a competent, respectable, and rapid clerk for the business part of my novels, and on his arrival at eleven o'clock, would say, "Mr. Jones, if you please, the archbishop must die this morning in about five pages. Turn to article 'Dropsy' (or what you will) in Encyclopædia. Take care there are no medical blunders in his death. Group his daughters, physicians, and chaplains round him. In Wales's 'London,' letter B, third shelf, you will find an account of Lambeth, and some prints of the place. Colour in with local colouring. The daughter will come down and speak to her lover in his wherry at Lambeth Stairs," etc., etc. Jones (an intelligent young man) examines the medical, historical, topographical books necessary, his chief points out to him in Jeremy Taylor (fol. London, MDCLV.) a few remarks such as might befit a dear old archbishop departing this life. When I come back to dress for dinner the archbishop is dead on my table, in five pages, medicine, topography, theology, all right, and Jones has gone home to his family some hours.'

According to some such fashion as this, no doubt, much of the work of Alexandre Dumas was done, but we know as well as Thackeray did that by no such method is a trio of musketeers to be created. It is to the creative genius

that gave life to the work, however the details might be executed, that Thackeray's tribute is paid.

'Of your heroic heroes, I think our friend Monseigneur Athos, Count de la Fère, is my favorite. I have read about him from sunrise to sunset with the utmost contentment of mind. He has passed through how many volumes? Forty? Fifty? I wish, for my part, there were a hundred more, and would never tire of his rescuing prisoners, punishing ruffians, and running scoundrels through the midriff with his most graceful rapier.'

SHAKESPEARE IN FRANCE.

THE learned M. Jusserand, who is as entertaining as he is learned, and who has done almost as much as Taine did (although in a very different way) to give a new interest to the history of English literature, has published a book upon the fortunes of Shakespeare among the Frenchmen. The subject of this investigation is so novel, as well as so interesting inherently, that it seems worth while to tell M. Jusserand's story in condensed form, although it has been made fully accessible to English readers. Of course, we all know in its general outline the history of Shakespearian study in France, but few even among students know the interesting details of the narrative which M. Jusserand has illustrated from the wealth of his rich and curious reading, which he has adorned with his piquant style and warmed with his sympathetic 'appreciation' of the greatest poet of the modern world.

M. Jusserand introduces his narrative by setting

side by side two passages, published respectively in 1645 and 1765, and roughly indicating the limits of the period to which the chief interest of the story attaches, the period during which Shakespeare won his way to the French consciousness. The first extract is from Blaeu's 'Théâtre du Monde,' a sort of glorified gazeteer, and informs the reader that Stratford is a pleasant little town which owes its entire glory to 'Jehan de Stratford, archevêque de Cantorbéry' and 'Hugues de Clopton, juge à Londres.' One of these worthies, it seems, built a church in Stratford, and the other spanned the Avon with a bridge. To this writer, Shakespeare was less than a name; Stratford had enough of glory in its claim upon the primate and the judge. The other extract is from the 'Encyclopædia,' and speaks of Stratford in this fashion: 'It was not long ago that the house in which Shakespeare (William) died in 1616 was still pointed out in this town; it was even regarded as a curiosity of the country and the inhabitants regretted its destruction, so jealous are they of the glory of having given birth to this sublime genius, the greatest in all dramatic poetry.' The article fills

five columns, and although its title is 'Stratford,' its exclusive subject is Shakespeare. To trace the history of the change in French opinion thus brought about by a century has been the task of M. Jusserand, and the subject is one richly deserving of attention.

The first judgment upon Shakespeare to find expression in the French language occurs in a catalogue of the Royal Library (1675–1684). A copy of the second folio had found its way into the collection, and the entry of the cataloguer included, besides a Latinized form of the title, the following note: 'This English poet has a rather fine imagination, he thinks naturally, he expresses himself with delicacy, but these fine qualities are darkened by the filth that he mingles with his comedies.' An inventory of Fouquet's library shows that it also contained a volume of Shakespeare 'valued at one livre.' The first *printed* mention of Shakespeare in France occurs in Baillet's 'Jugements des Savants' (1685–6). Here the name is given, without comment, in a list of English poets. Two or three other fugitive allusions to a poet variously named 'Shakspear' and 'Shakees Pear' may be found during the

closing years of the reign of the Roi-Soleil, but the great age of French literature was over, and Corneille, Racine, and Molière had long been in their graves, before even a Frenchman here and there had so much as dreamed that the English poet who had died when Corneille was a boy of ten was destined to enjoy a heritage of fame so world-wide and so enduring that even the genius of Molière would come to seem pale in the comparison.

The first half of the eighteenth century changed all this. Not only did Shakespeare become widely known in France, through criticism and even through translation, but his plays began to influence the French stage, and to awaken an uneasy feeling that possibly the rules of the classic drama might not have said the final word upon the subject of dramatic composition. During the period in question a great many writers found occasion to speak of Shakespeare in appreciative terms, and some of these writers were men whose opinions carried much weight. The Abbé Prévost, who made a long stay in England, and began to publish his 'Mémoires' in 1728, became a genuine anglomaniac, the first in date

of a numerous tribe. The beauty of Mrs. Oldfield inspired him to learn her language, and, having learned it, he read Shakespeare and waxed enthusiastic. 'For beauty of sentiment,' he says, 'whether tender or sublime, for the tragic form which stirs the depths of the heart and infallibly arouses passion in the dullest souls, for energy of expression and for the art of contriving situations and carrying on an action, I have read nothing, either in Greek or in French, which takes the palm from the English drama.' Even Montesquieu felt compelled to have an opinion concerning Shakespeare, although, as M. Jusserand remarks, it does him less honor than his opinions upon government. In 1830, he had an audience with the queen, who began to talk about the drama. She asked Lord Chesterfield, who was also present, how it happened that Shakespeare, who lived in the age Elizabeth, had made his women speak so badly and act so foolishly. 'Milord Chesterfield answered the question very well by saying that women did not appear upon the stage, and that their parts were taken by poor actors, for which reason Shakespeare did not take any great pains to make them

speak well. I should give the other reason that, to make women speak well, one must know the ways and the conventions of society. To make heroes speak, book knowledge is all that is necessary.' These explanations, observes the commentator, 'enabled Queen Caroline (to whom Voltaire had just dedicated his "Henriade") to understand why Beatrice, Rosalind, Portia, and Juliet speak so badly and are so foolish.' Meanwhile, Voltaire, who had the precious gift of writing with 'blacker ink' than other men, and of compelling attention to whatever he might choose to say, had lived for three years in London, and published his 'Lettres Philosophiques' in 1734. Henceforth, there was no escaping Shakespeare for the cultivated Frenchman, for Voltaire said things about him that could not possibly be ignored. His appreciation was qualified, but for that perhaps all the more forcible, and it is quite evident that he was more deeply impressed than he was willing to let appear. In the 'Lettres' he said: 'Shakespeare had a genius full of force and fertility, of what is natural and what is sublime, with not the least spark of good taste, and without the least

knowledge of the rules.' In the introduction to 'Sémiramis' (1748), where the famous epithet of the 'drunken savage' occurs, he said that 'Hamlet' contains 'sublime strokes worthy of the loftiest geniuses. It seems as if nature had taken delight in collecting within the brain of Shakespeare all that we can imagine of what is greatest and most powerful, with all that rudeness without wit can contain of what is lowest and most detestable.' Testimonies to Shakespeare were now rapidly multiplying. Riccoboni (1738) wrote a history of the English stage, saying of Shakespeare that 'having used up his patrimony, he took up the trade of robber. He wrote sanguinary dramas, "Hamlet" among others, and "Othello," in which we witness the incredible strangling of Desdemona.' Le Blanc (1745) found fairly fitting words in which to express the magic of Shakespeare's style. Finally, La Place (1746) made a French translation of many of the plays, and prepared analyses of the others.

In the latter half of the eighteenth century, we come face to face with the 'Shakespeare question,' which fills the last and most interesting chapter in all this curious history. Speaking of

the translation of 'Tom Jones' made in 1750, d'Argenson remarked: 'Anglicism is gaining upon us,' while Boissy, in a comedy dated 1753, made sport of the fickle tastes of the French public, which sought after strange gods, now in Italy, now in England.

> 'Son transport l'autre jour était l'anglomanie;
> Rien sans l'habit anglais ne pouvait réussir;
> Au-dessus de Corneille il mettait Shakespir.'

Something clearly had to be done, and Voltaire, who felt that both his critical precept and his practice as a dramatic poet had been largely responsible for this exaltation of the 'sauvage ivre,' stepped into the breach. It was all very well to praise Shakespeare in measured terms, as he had himself done, but when it came to a complete and sumptuous translation, dedicated to the king, and prefaced by the judgment that 'never had man of genius penetrated deeper into the abyss of the human heart or given better and more natural speech to the passions,' it was really going too far. 'Had not he [Voltaire] granted enough to the monster? Had not he introduced certain liberties to the French stage? Had not he cleared, and pruned, and given regular shape

to this lofty thicket?' But now there was nothing less in question than a revolution of taste. Even Diderot was calling Shakespeare 'a Gothic colossus between whose legs we might all pass.' 'All?' exclaimed Voltaire, and his indignation waxed. Nothing less than a formal protest to the Academy could suffice for such a critical situation. 'There are not in France enough buffets, enough foolscaps, enough pillories for such a fellow' as the audacious Le Tourneur, who was responsible for the translation that was so heralded. 'The frightful thing about it is that the monster has a party in France, and to cap the climax of calamity, it was I who formerly first spoke of this Shakespeare, it was I who first showed the French a few pearls that I had found in his enormous manure-heap.' Thus wrote the recluse of Ferney to a friend, and in this spirit was prepared his communication to the Academy. The protest was read at the session of August 25, 1776, and its success, for the hour at least, was complete. A year or two later, and only a few weeks before his death, Voltaire inscribed his last tragedy to the Academy, and took occasion to renew the attack. The letter ended with these

words: 'Shakespeare is a savage with sparks of genius that shine in a horrible night.' Thus closes this interesting and characteristic episode in Voltaire's life, and with it what is most significant about the history of the fortunes of Shakespeare in France under the old *régime*.

THE TIE THAT BINDS.

THE beautiful story of the Athenian captives at Syracuse, set free and restored with all honors to their fatherland because they could recite verses from the poet best beloved of their captors, has been made familiar to us all by two among the noblest works of Robert Browning. 'Any such happy man had prompt reward,' our poet tells us,

'If he lay bleeding on the battle-field
They stanched his wounds, and gave him drink and food;
If he were slave i' the house, for reverence
They rose up, bowed to who proved master now,
And bade him go free, thank Euripides!
Ay, and such did so: many such, he said,
Returning home to Athens, sought him out,
The old bard in the solitary house,
And thanked him ere they went to sacrifice.'

This story has much more than the virtue of an anecdote; it has rather the significance of an eternal truth, of the everlasting power of literature to reconcile differences, to soften the asperities of intercourse between nations, to strengthen the bonds of sympathy between human beings, and to

offer promise of that 'Parliament of man, the Federation of the world,' which the poet still insists upon foreseeing, however idle his dream be held by the reluctant and short-sighted multitude.

While the vision of the seer halts at nothing short of this ideal of the brotherhood of man finally accomplished, he whose faith is less firm and whose gaze cannot descry things hidden so deep in the mists of the future may still find in the possession of a common speech some earnest of a harmonious union for all to whom that speech is native. Particularly true is this of us born to the use of the English language,

> 'Who speak the tongue
> That Shakespeare spake, the faith and morals hold
> Which Milton held.'

A common language is the tie that binds men together almost in spite of themselves. This is true even if the language be one that has never risen to supreme excellence of expression upon the lips of the literary artist. A striking illustration of this fact is offered by Miss Olive Schreiner, in her account of the uncouth *Taal* of the Boer. The Boer himself is of mixed Dutch and Huguenot strain, and his speech is an almost in-

conceivably degraded dialect of the Dutch tongue. It is absolutely without a literature, and is probably incapable of originating one. Yet it has fused into a compact nationality the heterogeneous elements that went to the making of the Boer, and its unifying influence compels our admiration and our respect. If this be the power of a rough and poverty-stricken dialect, what limits may be set to the potency of so rich and refined an instrument of intercourse as the English language? It is not from mere pride of race that the philosophical observer rejoices in the amazing spread of the English language over the face of the earth. It is rather that he feels the immense significance to the future of mankind that must attach to an ever-widening use of the tongue in whose literature are embodied the noblest civic and ethical ideals of the modern world.

Ten generations have now followed one another since the man who in English speech gave supreme expression to these ideals was with us in the flesh. It is three centuries since the gentlest, and wisest, and deepest of modern souls was building the monument of song that none knew better than himself 'would outlive the perishing

body of men and things till the Resurrection of the Dead.' And who will dare say that the work of Shakespeare is more than barely begun? Year after year we commemorate the anniversary of his birth, and each year we look back with reverence to the past because of the promise that it gives us for the future. The words spoken a few years ago at the Stratford celebration by the man who so worthily represented among the English people the best elements of American culture, and the message of good-will sent to the Birmingham gathering by the Chief Magistrate of our Republic, were both expressions of the feeling that a common claim to Shakespeare constitutes between England and the United States a bond of union too strong to be broken by differences that might cause other nations to fly at one another's throats, too sacred to be made the sport of political passion or weakened by petty international jealousies.

The Philistine, we suppose, smiled at Mr. Cleveland's message, deeming it a bit of ineffectual but harmless sentimentality, yet the message embodied a deeper truth than ever entered into the self-satisfied Philistine consciousness.

Doubtless, also, he smiled at Mr. Bayard's assertion that America claimed Shakespeare no less than England, yet that too is the deepest kind of a truth. There is much reason to believe that the teaching of American history in our public schools leaves dominant in the child's mind an impression that England is our hereditary enemy. How much better it would be, and how much more essentially just, to emphasize the fact that, although temporary differences have now and then arisen between the two nations, yet these are as nothing in comparison with the glory of their common inheritance; that English history, from Alfred to Cromwell, belongs to us as rightfully as to our kinsmen over-sea, and should be to us a source of no less pride than that we justly take in the continuation of the history through Washington down to Lincoln. That this is the view ultimately to obtain among the English-speaking peoples seems to us certain. The very stars in their courses are working to bring it about, and the quiet, irresistible influence of a common intellectual tradition will some day accomplish a closer and more vital union between the scattered sections of the English family than

was ever cemented by bond of dynasty or political organization in the history of the world. There is a larger patriotism than that of the state, a wider fellowship than that of the geographical area; it is in community of achievement and aspiration that men are in truth brothers, and it is in literature that they find their real relationship.

The mutterings of war between the two great English-speaking peoples not long ago called forth by a reckless play in the politico-diplomatic game have not been wholly evil in their effect. If they were accompanied by a melancholy display of truculence on the part of time-serving politicians and journalists, they also served to make clear the almost absolute unanimity of the better elements of English-speaking society in rejecting the thought of such a war as a horror unspeakable and unthinkable. That it would be essentially civil war was the general verdict of sober-minded observers, for the essential characteristic of civil war is that the opposing forces should be sharers of the same sympathies and ideals, whether sharing or not the same governmental machinery. If all civilized nations knew each other as well as the sections of the English

race know each other, all war would be civil war, and burdened with the awful responsibilities of such strife. The jingoes and the fomenters of international ill-feeling are poor prophets. We prefer to pin our faith to the prophecy of the distinguished Englishman who once spoke to the members of the Harvard Law School. Upon that occasion, Sir Frederick Pollock, discussing 'The Vocation of the Common Law,' brought his remarks to a close with a peroration so significant and so eloquent that we cannot resist the temptation to borrow it for the adornment of our own discussion of so nearly allied a theme. 'Dreams are not versed in issuable matter, and have no dates. Only I feel that this one looks forward, and will be seen as waking light some day. If anyone, being of little faith or overcurious, must needs ask in what day, I can answer only in the same fashion. We may know the signs, though we know not when they will come. These things will be when we look back on our dissensions in the past as brethren grown up to man's estate and dwelling in unity look back upon the bickerings of the nursery and the jealousies of the class-room; when there is no use

for the word "foreigner" between Cape Wrath and the Rio Grande, and the federated navies of the English-speaking nations keep the peace of the ocean under the Northern Lights and under the Southern Cross, from Vancouver to Sydney, and from the Channel to the Gulf of Mexico; when an indestructible union of even wider grasp and higher potency than the federal bond of these States has knit our descendants into an invincible and indestructible concord.'

INTERNATIONAL AMITY.

A FULL generation has now passed since the publication of 'The Coming Race,' by the versatile novelist who had given us books as various as 'Pelham,' 'A Strange Story,' 'Harold,' 'The Caxtons,' and 'Kenelm Chillingly.' This forecast was impressive in many ways, but in no way more impressive than in its assertion that war would eventually be made impossible through improvements in the means of destruction. Weapons would become so deadly that war would practically mean annihilation of the contending forces, and the good sense of the nations would prevail in the abandonment of this barbaric way of settling disputes. The past thirty years have witnessed, not exactly the literal fulfillment of this prediction, but marked progress in the direction of its fulfillment, and, as a natural consequence of the increased effectiveness of fighting instruments, a marked reluctance to resort to the arbitrament of war.

Within much more recent years, a great Russian authority upon the art of war, as well as a man of the widest experience in practical affairs, has argued with convincing logic that war is fast becoming a practical impossibility. This beneficent result of scientific progress is due, not simply, as in Bulwer's argument, because of the increasing deadliness of weapons, but rather because, with this increasing deadliness, the advantage to the defense becomes so much greater than the advantage to the attack that all wars of the ordinary type, in which an invading army seeks to conquer a foreign country, must henceforth be so hopelessly one-sided as to be entirely futile. The position of the late M. de Bloch has received ample confirmation during the course of the distressing struggles of late years, in South Africa and the Philippine Islands, and the lesson of these conflicts is not likely to be missed. Entirely aside from the moral issues involved, both of these wars have borne out the essential assertion of M. de Bloch that a small body of men, armed with the modern means of defense, can resist, for an indefinite period, an invading body of overwhelmingly superior strength. In making this principle

clear, it may well happen that these wars will prove to have been blessings in disguise, and that the last turning-point in the centuries may prove to have been a real turning-point in the history of mankind.

A glance at the European situation seems to us also to offer reassuring signs. A few years ago a general conflict of the powers seemed inevitable, and it was doubtful whether the century would end without the precipitation of hostilities. To-day the danger seems far less imminent, and it looks as if the great international rivalries and jealousies might somehow be settled by peaceful means. There is the Hague Conference, for example. It is customary to speak slightingly of that remarkable gathering, but it was nevertheless symptomatic of the growing strength of cosmopolitan opinion. This is a factor in warfare which must henceforth be recognized, and, while it has not averted the deplorable wars of the last few years, it has made those responsible for them feel very uncomfortable. We have little doubt that the historian of the future will look back to the Tsar's eirenicon as to the beginning of a new era in international relations, and that the permanent

tribunal which remains as the substantial result of the Hague Conference will be invoked more than once.

The growing conviction of the impossibility of accomplishing by means of warfare what has been easily accomplished by the stronger force in past years is already acting as a quiet deterrent upon the minds of generals and statesmen. Coöperating with this influence is the other influence which comes from the growth of international sympathies and the cementing of the bonds of friendship in many obtrusive and unobtrusive ways. There is a story afloat that Prince Henry of Prussia, our recent national guest, in an expansive moment said that he was having the time of his life in America, adding that when at home they only used him to send to funerals. Certainly a better use has been found for him than that, when his few days' stay in this country has been productive of so much good-will and mutual esteem between the two great nations concerned in the exchange of courtesies. When the surface-character of the visit, its pomp and its parade, shall have been forgotten, when the tumult and the shouting shall have died away, its symbolical character will remain as the

one memorable thing about it, and will be likely to influence the relations between Germany and America for many years to come. The visit will remain a gracious memory long after the glitter of the event shall have grown dim in our recollection.

Another recent event of similar significance was the visit of the Baron d'Estournelles de Constant, bearing the greetings of the great European Republic to its sister Republic in the West. This distinguished statesman, journeying from Paris to Chicago for the express purpose of paying a Frenchman's tribute to the memory of the greatest of Americans, pleaded in eloquent terms for the cause of international good-will, for the sinking of political jealousies and commercial rivalries in the larger interests of the common humanity of the race, and wherever he spoke his noble idealism — which is nevertheless that of a practical man of the world — aroused echoes of responsive sympathy in the breasts of his hearers. Now the influence which is represented by such visits as these, and supplemented by the many other modern agencies which tend to the creation of a mutual understanding between our own people and those of a foreign country, amounts in the

total sum to an incalculably great force exerted in the interests of civilization and for the removal of ancient prejudice. Whenever men are brought together on the basis of a common interest, whether intellectual or social, the racial barriers first raised between them are at once cast down, and are as if they had never existed. Every international gathering of men of politics, of science, or of literature, offers a silent but effective protest against the passions which set nations at war with one another.

We do not expect that the world will be swayed by reason alone for many generations yet. Nevertheless, the ascendancy of reason is by slow degrees making itself felt. In spite of all discouragements, 'man is being made,' in Tennyson's phrase, and

> 'Prophet-eyes may catch a glory slowly gaining on the shade.'

To the logical mind the outcome of the evolutionary process, however long-delayed, is sure. Such a mind must admit that even patriotism is selfishness, although at several removes from what we commonly call by that name. There is the selfishness of the individual, first of all, which has

no redeeming quality. Then there is the selfishness of the family, in which the element of altruism first appears. Then there is the selfishness of the clan, the nation, and the race, and in each of these stages of the sentiment the altruistic character becomes more and more marked, until the clear thinker finds it impossible to believe that even race should set an absolute barrier to his sympathies, or that anything less than the whole of mankind should be held in his affection. To take this final step to a complete altruism is, no doubt, to overcome the 'last infirmity of noble mind,' — no easy task, — yet was it not taken by a Roman freedman over two thousand years ago, and did not the audience in the Roman theatre greet with thunders of applause the famous line which declared that no man may remain unconcerned by aught that touches the interests of humanity at large?

HERO-WORSHIP.

SEVERAL years ago, Professor John W. Burgess made some suggestive remarks, which we are about to quote, upon the ethics of hero-worship. Their immediate application was to the American anti-slavery agitation and the John Brown cult, but they convey a lesson and a warning that should be taken to heart in connection with many other subjects, not only in the department of political history, but in all the fields of human endeavor. 'I consider,' he said, 'that the highest responsibility resting upon an historian is the right selection of those personalities which he holds up for the worship of after generations. The morals of the age are determined most largely by the character of its heroes. No amount of precept, religious or ethical, will have one tithe of the influence in forming the ideals of our youth that hero-worship possesses. If there is, then, one moment more solemn than another in the life of the historian, one when he

should seek more earnestly than at another to be delivered from all prejudice, error, and weakness, it is when he essays the role of the hero-maker. If he fails in this, he may well question if all the other good he may have accomplished has not been over-balanced. There is a mawkish notion prevalent among the members of a certain very advanced class of people in almost all parts of the world, that if you add cant to crime you lessen the crime. Some of them think that the outcome of such a combination is the most heroic virtue. All of us judge crime more leniently when committed by persons who have views in common with us upon some important subject, and against persons whom we regard with feelings of hostility. But the moralist, the historian, and the inventor of epics are under bonds to civilization to rise above such weakness.'

The false kind of sentiment that is here condemned in such impressive terms has done much mischief in perverting the ethical judgments passed by mankind upon the conspicuous figures of history. In ancient times, it deified Alexander the Great and Julius Cæsar, to say nothing of a long line of lesser conquerors and leaders of vic-

torious hosts. In our own century, it has made of Napoleon a subject for eulogy rather than for execration, it has in a measure justified the career of the man of 'blood and iron' who looms so large in the history of modern Germany, and it has recently been engaged in glossing over the unscrupulous methods of the ambitious adventurer who came to regard South Africa as his own personal appanage. It would seem, indeed, when we consider these and the many similar cases which history presents to our view, that success, by whatever means achieved, is too often taken by the public as the adequate test of greatness, and that a man's career passes for heroic if only it be sufficiently brilliant to attract widespread attention, and sufficiently daring to impose upon the imagination of men. The ethical philosopher, of course, bases his judgment upon other criteria than these, for he knows that failure is often more heroic than success, and that many a mute inglorious career, with which only the few are acquainted, may offer a finer example for the emulation of mankind than is offered by the lives of those who shine in the fierce light that beats upon the seats of the mighty.

Carlyle has done much to glorify the type of man who succeeds by sheer strength of will, and the gospel of brute force has collected a singular company in his gallery of heroic figures. Yet it is from Carlyle himself that we have chosen a passage which emphasizes, better than it has often been emphasized, the eternal distinction between the strength that should command our admiration and the strength that is perversely employed. 'A certain strong man, of former time, fought stoutly at Lepanto; worked stoutly as Algerine slave; stoutly delivered himself from such working; with stout cheerfulness endured famine and nakedness and the world's ingratitude; and sitting in jail, with the one arm left him, wrote our joyfullest, and all but our deepest, modern book, and named it "Don Quijote": this was a genuine strong man. A strong man, of recent time, fights little for any good cause anywhere; works weakly as an English lord; weakly delivers himself from such working; with weak despondency endures the cackling of plucked geese at St. James; and, sitting in sunny Italy, in his coach-and-four, at a distance of two thousand miles from them, writes, over many reams of paper, the following sentence,

with variations: "Saw ever the world one greater or unhappier?" This was a sham strong man. Choose ye.' While this comparison, in its straining for antithetical effects, is not altogether fair to Byron, whose life was at least closed by a piece of genuine heroism, yet in the main it enforces a lesson that should be taken to heart. The Byronic cult was undoubtedly in its day responsible for a great deal of sickly sentimentalism, and its influence still lingers in English literature. As contrasted with Shelley's ardent and high-souled devotion to great causes and fine ideals, the passion of Byron at its best seems theatrical and insincere, and the gospel of 'Childe Harold' is but a poor thing when viewed in the glowing light of the 'Prometheus Unbound.'

In literature, as in other departments of human activity, there are sham heroes as well as genuine ones. This statement is not meant to imply that a writer whose private life will not bear the closest scrutiny is for that reason unheroic as a literary figure, for the weakness of will by which personal conduct is so often misshapen may coëxist with an intellectual life of the rarest distinction. And since the essential thing about a writer is

his work, he has a right to be judged by that work, almost irrespective of the life that lies behind it. The figure of Schopenhauer, for example, is one of the most heroic in literature, although the character of the man, as apart from the writer, left much to be desired. But the noble sincerity of his work, and its exaltation of fine ideals in both thought and conduct, are qualities so marked that we are quite justified in ignoring the unlovely aspects of the personal biography. On the other hand, the most conspicuous of literary figures may fail to assume heroic proportions if the work for which it stands have any suggestion of pose or insincerity. We may be very indulgent to the infirmities of the flesh, provided only they do not fetter or drag down the spirit. There is a false ring, which no sounding rhetoric can altogether deaden to the discerning ear, in the work of many masterful writers, and when that ring is once detected, the power of the voice to shape our intellectual ideals becomes sadly weakened. This false note may be caught over and over again in Byron; it makes the Whitman cult seem a strange phenomenon to minds entirely well-balanced and

sane, and it lessens the effective appeal of even such giants as Hugo and Carlyle.

When we think of certain figures in literature as peculiarly heroic, we do not usually stop for analysis, but are content to rest the judgment upon a mixture of impressions, in part derived from the life, and in part from the work. Scott and Balzac are good examples of this, for both are heroic figures in a very genuine sense, and we hardly know whether to admire them the more for their courageous struggle against adverse material conditions or for their resolute pursuit of a great creative purpose. Instead of taking these men for our illustration, let us take instead a man who was a hero of literature pure and simple, a man whose career has for the literary worker the same sort of lessons that the career of Spinoza has for the philosopher, of Gordon for the soldier, or of Mazzini for the statesman. The man is Gustave Flaubert, and our task is made easy by borrowing from an eloquent address made at Oxford by M. Paul Bourget. 'No man was ever more richly endowed with the higher virtues of a great literary artist,' says M. Bourget.

'His whole existence was one long struggle against circumstances and against himself, to live up to that ideal standard as a writer which he had set before himself from his earliest years. . . . He remains ever present among us, in spite of the new developments assumed by contemporary French literature, for he gave to all writers the most splendid example of passionate, exclusive love of literature. With his long years of patient and scrupulous toil, his noble contempt of wealth, honours, and popularity, with his courage in pursuing to the end the realization of his dream, he looms upon us an intellectual hero.'

And yet with all his passion for the impersonal, with all his striving to view life from the outside, holding, or at least expressing, 'no form of creed, but contemplating all,' the final lesson of Flaubert's life is, as his eulogist admits, that no man may wholly exclude himself from his writings. Had the author of 'Madame Bovary' really done so, 'they would not have reached us all imbued with that melancholy savour, that subdued pathos which makes them so dear to us. . . . This gift of expressing in their writings more than they themselves suspect, and of achieving results

exceeding their ambition, is only granted to those courageous and sincere geniuses whose past trials have gained for them the priceless treasure of wide experience. Thus did Cervantes write "Don Quijote," and Defoe "Robinson Crusoe," little dreaming that they infused into their writings, the former all the glowing heroism of Spain, the latter the dogged self-reliance of the Anglo-Saxon. If they had not themselves for many years practised these virtues of chivalrous enterprise in the one case, of indomitable endurance in the other, their books would have been what they intended them to be — mere tales of adventure. But their souls were greater than their art, and imbued it throughout with that symbolic power which is the efficient vitality of books. In the same way Flaubert's soul was greater than his art, and it is that soul which, in spite of his own will, he breathed into his writings, gaining for them a place apart in the history of the contemporary French novel.' Thus we come back, after all, to the position that heroism in literary production is somehow the outcome or reflex of something heroic in the character and the temper of the writer. It may be only a streak, so blended with others as to be

almost undiscernible to observers of the man apa
from his books, yet it is the deepest and true
part of him, and a noble book of any sort ma
well give pause to the judgment that too hastil
condemns a man's life because it is visibly flawe
But those men are the fittest subjects for her
worship in whom the life and the word are th
most fully consonant, whose lives are poems, an
whose words are acts. Such a hero was Goeth
with his lifelong devotion to the ideal that hel
the whole of life to be even more important tha
its separate elements of the good and the beau
tiful; such was Milton, whose 'soul was like
star, and dwelt apart,' and yet whose heart 'th
lowliest duties on herself did lay'; such wa
Dante, whose exiled soul still 'possessed the su
and stars,' and whose divine poem was wrough
not as a poem merely, but

> 'With close heed
> Lest, having spent for the work's sake
> Six days, the man be left to make.'

A PHILISTINE WATCHWORD.

READERS of 'The International Journal of Ethics' must have rubbed their eyes when they received a certain number of that earnest and valuable review, and found its first score of pages devoted to the great achievement of Dr. Nansen in Arctic exploration. What has such a matter to do with ethics? they may well have asked, and why should our attention be diverted to the deeds of this hardy Norseman when all our intellectual energies are needed for the examination of such engaging subjects as 'the relation of pessimism to ultimate philosophy,' and 'our social and ethical solidarity,' and 'the history and spirit of Chinese ethics,' to instance a few of the themes discussed within the same covers. The fact that Mr. Leslie Stephen was responsible for this diversion gave promise, indeed, of a high degree of intellectual entertainment; but one had to get well along into the essay before discovering what Dr. Nansen was really doing in this galley. The name of the

writer was, of course, sufficient to warrant the conclusion that the choice of subject would prove to be justified, even for the purposes of a 'journal of ethics'; and the event showed that some of the deepest matters underlying the general problem of conduct might be involved in the story of the explorer and the stanch ship that drifted with the northern ice-cap across the circumpolar seas.

There is, to put it bluntly, no ethical problem of greater importance than that which emerges from the consideration of just such activities as were so magnificently displayed by the expedition of Dr. Nansen. It is the fundamental problem of utilitarianism, and the most searching analysis is needed before we can hope to straighten it out. Into all discussions of this problem the philistine shibboleth of the 'practical' forces its way, and puts such questions as these: 'Is it not wrong to admire men whose fine qualities run more or less to waste; or, if that cannot be said, that might have been applied to some purpose of more importance to the welfare of mankind? To admire simplicity, daring, vigor, and good comradeship, is of course right; but ought we not, it may be

asked, to regret all the more their devotion of these virtues to inadequate ends?'

Mr. Stephen finds no difficulty in answering these questions to the confutation of their Philistine proponent. 'You admit,' he says to the short-sighted utilitarian who can see nothing beyond the immediate consequences of a given display of effort, 'you admit in some sense that the main end of conduct should be to promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number; and yet the precepts which you deduce from your principles seem to imply a colorless monotony and a life uncheered by any pursuits enjoyable in themselves.' Grouping the work of Arctic expeditions with other scientific work, and with art and literature, as constituting all together a sort of 'play,' he says: 'The justification for play, if we may call that play which involves most strenuous labor, must take a different ground. One ground is that the energy which has had no directly utilitarian aim has been of most essential service to mankind; that, if the world has improved even in the sense of being able to support a larger population in moderate comfort, the improvement has been owing not simply nor perhaps

chiefly to those who have consciously labored to redress grievances and remove causes of misery, but to men who have pursued intellectual aims, scientific or artistic, for the pure love of art or science.' And he concludes by saying that 'the true doctrine seems to be that it is an imperative duty for a man to devote his intellect to those purposes, whatever they may be, to which it is most fitted.'

The spokesmen of the 'practical' have done so much in all ages, and are still doing so much, to chill enthusiasms and to narrow the scope of life, that we make no apology for recurring to this well-worn theme, and pointing out once more the essential misconception of those well-intentioned but purblind persons. 'Why was this waste of the ointment made?' is a question that we hear repeated, in various disguises, every day of our lives. Now there are two satisfactory answers to the question in all of its forms: one of them faces the utilitarian critic upon his own plane and leaves him no ground upon which to stand, while the other makes the radical demand that he broaden his conception of utility and rearrange his notions of conduct in accordance with a far

finer envisagement of the purpose of human life.

The first answer is the one more commonly made. Mr. Stephen, for example, makes it in these words: 'Knowledge can scarcely be advanced in any direction without throwing light upon knowledge in general; and the devotion of some men of great powers to minute and apparently remote interests is really to be admired because it constantly leads to unforeseen and important results.' The history of science is so filled with illustrations of this truth that we hardly know where to begin in making a selection. Take almost any of the achievements of applied science and trace the underlying ideas back to their genesis in the brain of some devoted investigator, or, reversing the process, take from the annals of the history of science any idea that has proved fertile and show what extremely practical results have grown out of it, and, in whichever way we construct the genealogy of our chosen idea, we shall be filled with wonder at its consequences, and made to realize that such consequences must, in the very nature of things, be largely or wholly unforeseen when the idea first springs to birth. How useless, to all seeming,

were the early studies of micro-organisms, — and yet these studies laid the foundation for the vast benefactions of Pasteur and made a reality of the long-cherished dream of a rational theory of disease. Or how could Oersted, or the most keen-sighted of his contemporaries, have foreseen that his discovery of the deflection of the magnetic needle by the galvanic current was to make possible all the countless applications of electricity to our modern life? In view of such facts as these, how childish it is to ask of every new contribution to knowledge that it at once justify its existence by doing something for man's material comfort, and how benighted must be his mental condition who scorns every new scientific truth that may not at once be put to some practical use. And, to return to the immediate theme of this discourse, the man stands intellectually self-condemned who is rash enough to assert that the deep-sea soundings or the magnetic and meteorological observations made by the Nansen expedition may not in the future prove to have furnished a necessary link in the chain of reasoning whereby some vast new gift shall be bestowed by science upon human life.

Strong as appears, however, the argument above outlined, and amply sufficient as it is to answer the *cui bono?* of the Philistine critic, we are not content to rest upon it the case for science. For there always underlies the discussion of this subject a source of misunderstanding that is rarely probed. The respective champions of science and of utilitarianism may be using the same words, but they are not speaking the same language. In employing the terms which they bandy about so freely — such terms, for example, as 'use,' 'benefit,' and 'practical value' — they are nearly always playing at cross-purposes, and the one seldom understands what the other really means. Why is one thing more practical than another? The only possible answer is that it contributes more directly to the satisfaction of some desire. But how great is the arrogance of those who single out certain desires of a sort relating almost wholly to matters of material comfort, and assume that those desires alone are worthy of being gratified at the cost of any effort. Is a desire to be scorned because it does not happen to be entertained by the majority of unthinking people, and is the quality of a desire to

count for nothing in this calculus of ethical values? And if we take quality into the reckoning, does not the advancement of knowledge minister to the best of all desires? The search after truth is an end in itself, and nothing can be more practical, in any sense of the term worth considering, than the prosecution of that high quest. To think God's thoughts seemed to Kepler a worthy employment for his best intellectual energies, and

> 'To follow knowledge like a sinking star
> Beyond the utmost bound of human thought,'

seemed to the master-singer of our own age the noblest of all aims. It is by just the extent to which man is capable of entertaining such ideal ambitions that he is lifted above the beast of the fields, and the humanity is in pitiable case that can scorn any sincere effort to strengthen the foundations of the temple of human knowledge or bear its dome still further skyward.

A QUESTION OF LITERARY CONSCIENCE.

THERE are few chapters of literary criticism that surpass, in display of subtle insight and essential justice of conclusion, the well-known essay of Charles Lamb upon the artificial comedy of the Restoration. This essay has always been a stumbling-block to the Philistine, and will always appear paradoxical to the reader whose intellectual perceptions do not nicely balance his moral prepossessions. Macaulay, as we know, found it both a paradox and a stumbling-block, and assailed it with the weaver's beam that he wielded with such redoubtable energy. But in spite of the attack of Macaulay, and of other persons defective in their literary sympathies, the ideas advanced by Lamb in this essay have held their own, and criticism has accepted their fundamental validity. It will be remembered that Lamb's argument runs, in substance, to the effect that the writers whom he defends created a con-

ventional world of their own, in which the rules that ordinarily govern, and properly should govern, human conduct, have no more application than the rules of ordinary probability to the incidents of a Grimm *Mährchen* or an Arabian tale. Lamb declared himself 'glad for a season to take an airing beyond the diocese of the strict conscience,' and now and then 'for a dream-while or so, to imagine a world with no meddling restrictions.' The world of Congreve and Wycherley 'is altogether a speculative scene of things, which has no reference whatever to the world that is. . . . The whole is a passing pageant, where we should sit as unconcerned at the issues, for life or death, as at a battle of the frogs and mice.' His complaint is that people no longer take delight in the pageant, because they have grown too strenuous in their literal-minded interpretation of the show. 'Like Don Quixote, we take part against the puppets, and quite as impertinently.' We are too self-conscious to give ourselves up to mere distraction, and go to the theatre not 'to escape from the pressure of reality so much as to confirm our experience of it; to make assurance double, and take a bond of fate.'

The fashion of the Restoration comedy is one that has now passed away from popular interest, but another fashion has taken its place, concerning which Lamb's argument is equally to the point. This is the fashion of romantic fiction, toward which our strenuous moralists are apt to assume a deprecatory attitude, upon much the same grounds that served as a basis for the condemnation of the earlier fashion. Romantic fiction is essentially unreal, we are told; it does not reflect the conditions of actual life, it encourages us to dream instead of setting us face to face with the problems of human existence, it dissipates our energies instead of enlisting them in behalf of worthy social and intellectual causes. The charge is doubtless true, but is there no place for dreams in the economy of the spiritual life? Are we to reject the ministry of every form of literature that takes us away from our surroundings, or is not closely related to our immediate pursuits and interests? Entertainment may not be the highest mission of literature, but it is surely a legitimate object for a writer to set before himself, and those writers who offer entertainment, in whatever fashion the hour may

approve, are not undeserving of the public and will not find their efforts unrewarded. To say that romantic fiction moves in an unreal world of its own making should not be held a matter for reproach; it should rather be recognized as the necessary condition of this form of art, and should make us grateful for the refuge which it offers to the mind oppressed by the burden, at times so intolerable, of the actual world. The art of fiction depends upon conventions quite as fully as does the dramatic art. The action must be compressed far beyond the limits of probability, and worked out with small regard for the many disturbing influences by which it would certainly be complicated in real life. The villain must be foiled, the hero must triumph, and the lovers must be united, even if there are only a score of pages in which to accomplish all these things. Whatever the length of the story, these are its fundamental requirements; and to such ends all the means employed by the writer must be bent. Each separate scene, moreover, must be heightened in effect far beyond anything that is likely to occur in everyday life; two people seated side by side at a dinner-table must make their con-

versation more brilliant than any that was ever actually heard upon such an occasion; the members of every group of persons brought into contact for the purposes of the narrative must say and do just the right things at the right moments, instead of floundering about in act and speech as they doubtless would in the haphazard actual world. In that world, as the poet reminds us, we get 'never the time and the place and the loved one all together'; but in the world which the romantic imagination creates we have a right to expect this conjunction, and a reason for justifiable disappointment if it is missed.

The romance of pure adventure appeals to some of our healthiest instincts. Both as boys and as men, we like to follow the fortunes of pirates, to read about shipwrecks and all other sorts of forlorn hopes, and to applaud the deeds of heroes who slay their enemies right and left, and escape from the most desperate dangers by feats of improbable prowess and display of indomitable if not superhuman valor. The gentlest spirits as well as the most fiery delight in these things, and delight in them precisely because they are so far removed from ordinary human

experience. They are the happenings of a world which, at least when we have outgrown boyhood, we have no desire to make our own, a world which could not be our own if we wished it, a world which we frankly recognize as imagined for our diversion. We should ill requite those who purvey for us all this innocent entertainment were we to arraign them before the bar of conscience, to make stern inquiry into the probability of their imaginings, and to pronounce upon the conduct of their characters such severe judgments as would doubtless await such conduct in the courts of justice of our prosaic world.

Nevertheless, although we are fully persuaded of the right of romantic fiction to exist and of its heroes to perform acts which would not bear the test of a prosaic and conventional morality, we are not without certain searchings of soul when we contemplate the enormous vogue enjoyed by this species of literature at the present day. Of that vogue there can be no question. It would be difficult to point to any earlier period in which popular fiction was so largely made up of tales of adventure, tales whose interest centres upon exploits rather than principles, upon the triumph

of the individual will rather than of the abstract ideal. There is an appalling amount of bloodshed in our popular romance, and an almost unexampled degree of recklessness in the choice of means for the desired end. One need not be a professional moralist to correlate this illustration of popular taste with the wave of brutality which seems to be sweeping over our civilization, and which threatens to submerge the moral territory that has been reclaimed at so great a cost of individual and collective effort. For some reason or other, the finer instincts of civilization seem of late years to have become dulled, and both individuals and nations are suffered without effective protest to commit acts which should arouse the fiercest indignation for their contravention of all the principles by which nations achieve true greatness and individuals bequeath to their descendants a heritage of honorable fame. We should hardly include our popular literature among the active causes of this degenerative process, but it may not be unfair to regard it as symptomatic. We may read with zest the popular literature which glories in brute force, and we may get no harm from it as individuals; but

we must 'view with alarm,' as the political platforms say, the ever-increasing hold which this species of literature is gaining upon the popular mind. If such literature does not directly shape the actions of men, it certainly does to some extent reflect their ideals, and its present prominence is such as to confront the literary conscience with a serious question. Should we, because they afford us such admirable entertainment, give our unqualified approval to these writings that glorify all the brutal passions, that move in a world unswayed by the moral law, and that substitute for the Christian precepts a gospel whereof Carlyle and Nietzsche are the evangelists? It is a serious question, whether the ideals of public and private morality, as reflected in the popular literature of the day, which the century has just passed on to the present, will bear a favorable comparison with those which were bequeathed to the last century by its predecessor.

THE ARTIST AND THE MAN.

AMONG the many principles for which the late John Ruskin contended with all the force of his impassioned and vehement eloquence, there is one which occupies a peculiarly significant position. It is the principle that a man's art and a man's character are so mutually dependent that the latter is implicit in the former. This principle is central in the great critic's doctrine, for it supplies the nexus whereby his ethics and his æsthetics become united into a single body of teaching. It affords the justification for his constant injection of moral questions into his discussions of art, and for his persistent employment of artistic illustrative material in his treatment of the problems that relate to the conduct of life. The principle in question finds its typical expression in such sentences as these: 'The faults of a work of art are the faults of its workman, and its virtues his virtues.' 'Great art is the expression of the mind of a great man, and

mean art, that of the want of mind of a weak man.' 'And always, from the least to the greatest, as the made thing is good or bad, so is the maker of it.' 'When once you have learned how to spell those most precious of all legends, — pictures and buildings, — you may read the characters of men, and of nations, in their art, as in a mirror; — nay, as in a microscope, and magnified a hundredfold; for the character becomes passionate in the art, and intensifies itself in all its noblest or meanest delights.' Finally, the doctrine of these pronouncements receives summing-up in the following impressive fashion: "Of all facts concerning art, this is the one most necessary to be known, that, while manufacture is the work of hands only, art is the work of the whole spirit of man; and as that spirit is, so is the deed of it; and by whatever power of vice or virtue any art is produced, the same vice or virtue it reproduces and teaches.'

There are many impulsive sayings to be found in the forty or fifty volumes of Ruskin, many opinions too clearly born of a moment's intellectual caprice to be deserving of more than a moment's attention, but these which we have quoted

do not belong to that category. They are rather the deliberate records of a lifelong belief, time and time again solemnly reaffirmed, and fundamental to a comprehension of the whole structure of their author's thought. That the proposition which they embody has been vigorously denied is matter of common intelligence among those familiar with the currents of critical discussion during the past half-century or more. The doctrine of 'art for art's sake' falls to pieces unless we reject the notion that the character of the artist is reflected in his work. That doctrine has exerted a strong influence upon criticism, and there was a time, not so many years ago, when it seemed to hold the field against its opponents. If we consider the case of literary art alone, there were two excellent reasons for the apparent ascendancy of this opinion in the forum of æsthetical controversy. The first was offered by the fact that didacticism in literature had been greatly overdone. When we think of the long and dreary annals of allegorical composition and sermonizing in verse, we naturally revolt from the assumption that this sort of activity has anything to do with literature proper, and

it gives us a sense of satisfaction to take refuge in even the extreme opinion that poetry has no business to teach anything, that its message is one of pure beauty, and that, by just so much as it departs from this aim, its purpose becomes weakened, and its spiritual power impaired. The second reason which seemed to justify the principle of 'art for art's sake' was offered by those over-zealous critics of literature who were constantly dragging petty personalities into their work, raising a great pother over the superficial aspects of a poet's private life, and making out of some carelessness of habit or fault of temper a structural defect in character which must always be kept in the foreground of thought when the poet's work was under consideration. It was no wonder that these two influences combined drove many sensitive intelligences to the extreme of revolt. The fact that, on the one hand, such didacticism as Young's 'Night Thoughts' and Pollok's 'Course of Time' could pass for poetry at all, and that, on the other, whole sections of the reading public should be warned against the poetry of Byron and Shelley because their lives did not square with the social conven-

tions of their time — this twofold fact, we say, based upon a false perspective and a complete misunderstanding of the poetic art, was amply sufficient to account for the success of a form of teaching whose fundamental object was to restore to poetry the dignity which it seemed to be in danger of losing.

When, however, we come to take a broader view of the whole question, it must be admitted that the doctrine of 'art for art's sake,' the doctrine that the artist must deliberately eschew the intention of teaching, that, if he have the divine fire within him, the purity of its glow will remain undimmed whatever the life he may lead, is almost as narrow as the doctrine against which it was raised in protest. Because certain dull poets have been offensively didactic we have no right to say that poets of genius may not engage their powers in the furtherance of worthy ideals. That some great poets have had personal failings, about which their critics have been more curious than was necessary, is no reason why we should deny that, other things being equal, the blameless life will in the long run express itself in nobler forms than the life that has not escaped 'the

contagion of the world's slow stain.' As far
the latter of these two propositions is concern
we take a just pride in the thought that Milt
and Tennyson were no less great as men than
poets, and, while giving full acceptance as poe
to the work of men whose character we may
call unblemished, it would distinctly add to
satisfaction could we know them to have li
lives in stricter consonance with their ideals.
for the former proposition, we need only point
the long line of great poets who have allied th
work with the practical human causes of r
gious and ethical teaching, of political and so
progress. From the defence of the Areopa
and the old conservative order by Æschylus
the denunciation by Hugo of the saturnalia
a bastard French imperialism, the most fam
of poets have ever been ready — have fo
themselves irresistibly impelled — to make th
work tell in the never-ending struggle betw
truth and error, between right and wrong,
tween the conservative and the destruct
agencies in the life of the social organism.

How does our star-like Milton serve to il
minate the doctrine of 'art for art's sake'? I

true that he turned from serene verse to stormy prose in his championship of the struggling Puritan Commonwealth, but it is also true that when he turned again to verse his thought took on a new majesty, and that the deepest feelings of puritanism are to be found rather in his epics than in his polemics. Surely, our literature has no nobler art than that of the 'Paradise Lost,' but was the poem written for 'art's sake' alone? Not unless we take 'art's sake' and 'life's sake' to be synonymous, which they probably are, if our definitions be made sufficiently liberal. In the final synthesis, beauty and truth and virtue are one and the same thing, and the 'art's sake' shibboleth appears but a question-begging phrase. We cannot judge the artist without in large measure judging the man as well, for as Professor Corson says, speaking of such poets as Milton, 'their personalities and their works are consubstantial.' But we may easily make the mistake — and often do make it — of basing our estimate of a poet's character too much upon the trivial outward aspects of his life, and too little upon the writings in which his inmost self stands clearly revealed. If his actions and his books

give each other the lie, why should we jump to the conclusion that the written expression of character must be insincere; why not take the more reasonable view that the true personality is to be sought in the books? They, at least, if read aright, offer a form of self-expression that is deliberate and clear; while a man's daily actions are impulsive and open to a hundred misinterpretations.

Again writing of Milton, Professor Corson says: 'His personality is felt in his every production, poetical and prose, and felt almost as much in the earliest as in the latest period of his authorship. And there is no epithet more applicable to his own personality than the epithet august. He is therefore one of the most educating of authors, in the highest sense of the word, that is, educating in the direction of sanctified character.' What is here said of Milton we believe to be equally true of Shakespeare. We all know what Wordsworth said of the sonnet, that 'with this key Shakespeare unlocked his heart,' how Browning replied to this dictum with an indignant, 'If so, the less Shakespeare

he,' and how Matthew Arnold, in a vein similar to that of Browning, wrote these lines:

> 'Others abide our question. Thou art free.
> We ask and ask — Thou smilest and art still,
> Out-topping knowledge.'

In this conflict of opinion, it seems to us that Wordsworth has expressed the deeper truth. It is true that the closest scrutiny of Shakespeare's work will not give us the facts about his boyish poaching upon Sir Thomas Lucy's preserves, or explain the mystery of that 'second-best bed' bequeathed to his wife. But the knowledge of a man's personality does not depend upon such trivialities as these. We know his qualities of heart and mind better than we know those of our closest friends. We know what he thought upon most serious subjects, and how he felt about human life in its most significant aspects. The superstition which would have us believe that, as a dramatist, he exhibited the personalities of his created characters and concealed his own beyond any possibility of surmise has been tenacious, but is at last losing its hold upon intelligent students. The little book of Mr.

Frank Harris upon the man Shakespeare, and the still more recent book of Professor Goldwin Smith upon the same subject, are interesting records of the change of opinion upon this subject. Still more interesting is the closing paragraph of the important work of Shakespearian criticism which we owe to Dr. Brandes:

'The William Shakespeare who was born at Stratford-on-Avon in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, who lived and wrote in London in her reign and that of James, who ascended into heaven in his comedies and descended into hell in his tragedies, and died at the age of fifty-two in his native town, rises a wonderful personality in grand and distinct outlines, with all the vivid coloring of life from the pages of his books, before the eyes of all who read them with an open, receptive mind, with sanity of judgment, and simple susceptibility to the power of genius.'

THE DUTIES OF AUTHORS.

THAT every right implies a correlated duty, and that the assertion of the one should be conditioned upon the acceptance of the other, is a principle in which theoretical is more common than practical acquiescence. The burden of Mazzini's criticism of the French Revolution was that it gave undue prominence to the Rights of Man, and had little to say about the corresponding Duties of Man. It was the fundamental aim of that patient, heroic soul to moralize the European revolutionary movement by insisting upon the claim of duty as a necessary accompaniment of the claim of right.

Transferring the discussion from the political to the literary plane, we are inclined to think that too much has lately been heard about the rights of authors in comparison with what is said about their duties. It is then with peculiar satisfaction that we call attention to the chapter on 'The Duties of Authors' included in Mr.

Leslie Stephen's collection of addresses to ethical societies. While Sir Walter Besant and his associates in the Society of Authors are engaged in the praiseworthy work of exposing the wily ways of the dishonest publisher, it is well that a strong voice should now and then discourse upon the responsibilities of authorship, and sound a note of warning against the temptations which beset the man of letters under the modern commercial literary *régime*. The ethics of literature is a large subject with many ramifications, and neither Mr. Stephen nor any other man could hope to treat of it exhaustively within the limits of a single essay; but the address to which reference is now made touches upon the more salient features of the subject, and is characterized in unusual measure by good sense, sound logic, and fine ethical tone.

So large a proportion of literary energy nowadays is absorbed by journalism that no discussion of the duties of authors can ignore the work of those who write for the newspaper press. It is in journalism, also, that writers are most strongly assailed by the temptations peculiar to their craft. The question of anonymity, for

example, is one that must be considered in its ethical relations, and it takes the keenest self-searching for a man to be sure that under the impersonal shelter of the plural pronoun he is not saying things to which he would blush to attach his signature. Nothing is more contemptible than the work of the writer who makes himself a hireling of some party organ, and earns his daily bread by the advocacy of doctrines to which he does not personally subscribe; doctrines that are abhorrent to him as an individual. Such a prostitution of literary talent may be defended, is defended, in many ingenious ways, but the cobwebs of sophistry woven about the discussion by defenders of this practice are easily swept away by anyone who is determined to see things as they are and regulate his conduct in accordance with the fundamental principles of morality. The stock argument by which lawyers justify their defence of the criminal of whose guilt they are convinced — the plea that such a person is entitled to the most favorable interpretation of which the law admits, and that someone must secure it for him — is not valid in the discussion of questions of public

interest. No matter of governmental policy is entitled to any other defence than may be made for it by those who honestly believe in its advisability; for those who disbelieve in it, yet enlist their powers in its behalf, no condemnation can be too strong. The first duty of the citizen is to further what he honestly believes to be the real interests of the state, and, if his activity take the special form of argument through the medium of the press, to be sure that his public utterances tally with his private opinions. To repudiate this obligation is to act the part of traitor, and in a more dangerous, because a more insidious, way than that of the leader of an armed revolt. 'To thine own self be true' is a precept that journalists, more than most other people, need to keep in mind.

Anonymity doubtless serves as a shelter for much of the baseness that we are reprobating; yet historically, Mr. Stephen tells us, it is rather the effect than the cause.

'According to a well-known anecdote, two writers of the eighteenth century decided by the toss of a half-penny which should write for Walpole and which should write for his adversary Pulteney; but the choice was generally decided by less reputable motives. Now, so

long as the press meant such a class it was of course natural that the trade should be regarded as discreditable, and should be carried on by men who had less care for their character than for their pockets. In England, where our development has been continuous and traditions linger long, the sentiment long survived; and the practice which corresponded to it — the practice, that is, of anonymity — has itself survived the sentiment which gave it birth.'

Mr. Stephen then goes on to say:

'The mask was formerly worn by men who were ashamed of their employment, and who had the same reasons for anonymity as a thief or an anarchist may have for a disguise. It may now be worn even by men who are proud of their profession, because the mask has a different significance.'

This latter statement is to a considerable extent true, but we are far from sure that the sentiment is dead that gave birth to anonymity, or that great numbers of journalists to-day do not write what they are told to write, and paid for writing, irrespective of their own convictions.

Anonymity has other dangers than the major one of making men false to themselves. It affords, for example, 'obvious conveniences to a superficial omniscience.' Mr. Stephen remarks with genial humor:

'The young gentleman who dogmatizes so early might

blush if he had to sign his name to his audacious utterances. His tone of infallibility would be absurd if we knew who was the pope that was promulgating dogmas. The man in a mask professes to detect at a glance the absurd sophistries which impose upon the keenest contemporary intellects; but if he doffed the mask and appeared as young Mr. Smith, or Jones, who took his degree last year, we might doubt whether he had a right to assume so calmly that the sophistry is all on the other side.'

The one safe rule seems to be that the anonymous writer 'should say nothing when he speaks in the plural which would make him look silly if he used the first person singular.' The man who should follow this rule, and who should refrain from allowing any personal feeling to invade his judgments of other men and their works, might safely be trusted to write unsigned articles by the score, and, if he remained all the while true to his convictions, could not fairly be charged with falling short of the whole duty of authorship.

Another temptation that besets the author is that of being content to follow current opinion, instead of doing his best to aid in its formation. 'There is an old story,' says Mr. Stephen, 'which tells how a certain newspaper used to

send out an emissary to discover what was the common remark that everyone was making in omnibuses and club smoking-rooms, and to fashion it into next morning's article for the instruction of mankind. The echo affected to set the tune which it really repeated.' One of the most obvious duties of authorship is that of having something of your own to say, and of preparing yourself by strenuous effort to say it in the most direct and forcible manner. There is a great deal more of 'facile writing' than there was half a century ago, but it is doubtful if there is any more writing of the first-rate sort, 'which speaks of a full mind and strong convictions, which is clear because it is thorough.' This phase of the question of duty as it relates to authors could not be better put than in the following passage:

'I have been struck in reading newspaper articles, even my own, by the curious loss of individuality which a man seems to suffer as a writer. Unconsciously the author takes the color of his organ; he adopts not only its sentiment but its style, and seems to become a mere transmitter of messages, with whose substance he has no more to do than the wires of the electric telegraph which carries them. But now and then we suddenly come across something fresh and original; we know by instinct

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that we are being addressed by another man, and are in a living relation to a separate human being, not to a mere drilled characterless unit of a disciplined army; we find actually thoughts, convictions, arguments, which, though all arguments are old, have evidently struck the writer's mind, and not merely been transmitted into his pen; and then we may know that we are in the presence of a real force, and meeting with a man who is doing his duty.'

Mr. Stephen's exposition of his theme is so attractive that we are loath to dismiss with a few words, as must however, be done, the remaining features of the discussion. There is the fruitful subject of writing for money, upon which we read:

'I do not doubt that authors ought to be paid; but I certainly agree that a money reward ought never to be the chief aim of their writing. And I confess that some utterances about copyrights in these days have jarred upon me, because they seem to imply that the doctrine is not disavowed so unequivocally as it should be by our leaders.'

Then there is the subject of writing too much to write anything well, concerning which the author discourses feelingly, and of which melancholy examples are about us on every hand. Then there is the suggestive disquisition upon literary preaching, which deserves an article by

itself. Finally, there is the deeply interesting discussion of duty as it applies to the imaginative worker, the duty of eschewing false realism and false sentimentalism alike, of avoiding like the plague the promptings of the familiar spirit that confuses notoriety with fame, and, pointing out how easily the one may be secured, deludes the writer into thinking that it is much the same thing as the other. All these matters must be passed over with a word, and space found only for the conclusion that 'the enduring power of every great writer depends not merely on his intellectual forces, but upon the charm of his character—the clear recognition of what it really is that makes life beautiful and desirable, and of what are the baser elements that fight against the elevating forces.'

TENDENCIES IN LITERATURE.

To THE seasoned critic, there are few things so amusing as the habit the amateur observer has of indulging in broad generalizations concerning contemporary literature. Some book proves to be the fashion of the hour, and straightway it is made the subject of philosophizing. What is merely a ripple upon the surface of popular taste is viewed as a fresh and deep current of human thought, and this supposedly new departure of the spirit serves as a starting-point for many a solemn disquisition upon types and schools and movements. These grave inductions from a single instance, or a few instances, however philosophical the parade of the terms in which they are presented, betray their essentially unphilosophical character by the obvious inadequacy of their basis of fact. They are made only to be forgotton, as, in the majority of cases, the books that occasioned them are forgotten, after the lapse of a few years. It is not so very

long ago that the American public was reading and talking 'Trilby' with such frantic enthusiasm that one would have thought a new literary era had dawned. Many were the seeming-wise reflections of which this entertaining story was the innocent provoking cause, many were the hopes, or the fears, for our literary development that took their starting point from the vogue of this particular piece of fiction. All this discussion was the work of the amateur, and we now realize how absurd it all was. The novel in question is clean forgotten to-day, and with it the whole argument based upon its success. Anyone can see now what the practiced critic saw all the time, that there was no more significance in the astonishing vogue of 'Trilby' than there had been a score of years earlier in the equally astonishing vogue of 'Helen's Babies.'

In point of fact, when the philosophical student of literature confronts the question of literary tendencies, he sees two things with absolute distinctness. One of them is that the study of tendencies, of movements, of the transformations of a nation's idealisms, is the most important thing about the history of any literature, the only

thing, indeed, that invests a literature with real significance for the history of culture. If he cannot discern the evolutionary process at work, he misses all the salt and savor of his subject, and his conclusions are empirical or merely subjective. The other thing is that this process of development, this history of movements and transformations, requires for its proper observation a considerable period to be taken into survey, and a considerable detachment, in point of time, from that period. The one well-nigh impossible task is to trace the direction of the evolutionary process in one's immediate surroundings, or to make any prophecies for the future save those that are the logical outcome of some tendency that has been in operation long enough to become clearly discerned.

Suppose one were to take some representative collection of contemporary literature, such, for example, as the closing section of either of Mr. Stedman's great anthologies, and read it through intent only upon the detection of tendencies, or of unifying principles, he would find it an extremely difficult matter to reduce to order his confused and varied impressions. In such a case,

it is impossible to see the woods for the trees. To discern the tendencies at work in such a mass of literary production, to find the pattern in so complex a web of intellectual activity, to distinguish the currents from the eddies in so wide an expanse of waters, would be a task well worth attempting, indeed, but one likely to baffle the most persistent effort. Of course the problem might to a certain extent be simplified by discarding the great mass of the work as merely reflecting the hues caught from the greater poems, as merely echoing the significant ideas of the age put forth by the few writers who set the pitch for the symphony. The lesser writers contribute to the harmony (or the discord) and the tone-coloring of the composition, but they do not modify the fundamental character of the movement. Nevertheless, the difficulty is not really removed by this process of elimination; it is somewhat lessened, and that is all.

A few generalizations, however, concerning the tendencies and characteristics of our contemporary English literature it seems reasonably safe to make, and one of them is that we are living

in a critical rather than a creative period. As the few great survivors of the earlier age one by one pass away, we feel acutely conscious that the places are left unfilled. The season of analysis and introspection is clearly upon us. In such a period as ours, versatility, good taste, and excellent workmanship abound, and the number of good writers, as distinguished from the great masters, is astonishingly large. Sometimes they spring up in the most unexpected quarters, and anticipation flutters at the thought of a possible resurgence of the creative impulse. But we must not deceive ourselves into thinking that our bustling literary activity is swelling to any appreciable or noticeable extent the stock of the world's masterpieces. Our literature of to-day is various and entertaining, it has taste and even distinction, but it is not a literature adorned by the opulent blossoming of genius.

If we may venture, after the preceding disclaimer, to indicate any distinct tendencies in the English and American literature of the past few years, we would say that it has moved, and is still moving, in the direction of artistic freedom, of cosmopolitan interest, and of broadened social

sympathy. It no longer suffers, for example, under the reproach of being produced with an exaggerated deference to the Young Person. To place under the ban whole tracts of human life, to refrain from dealing with whole groups of the most important of human relations because their treatment gives offense to immature minds, is a procedure not justified by the larger view of what literature means. This lesson we have learned of recent years. If we take into account the newest of new women and the youngest of emancipated young men, it may seem that the lesson has been too well learned, but, on the whole, out literary art has gained strength with its newly acquired freedom. Our literature is also measurably freed from its old-time provincialism of outlook. We have seen established for the mintage of the mind a broader compact than any Latin Union; if an idea have but intrinsic value, its currency does not now need to be forced in other countries than that of its origin. This, too, is a great gain, and will make the next creative period all the easier of approach. But the greatest gain of all, to our thinking, is the awakening of the new social sympathy that char-

acterizes our recent literature. We hear a good deal of 'democratic art,' and much of what we have thus far got is distressingly crude and dull with didacticism. But the future of our race belongs to democracy, and literature must make the best of this inevitable movement. That it will eventually learn how to shape the idealism of democracy into forms of convincing beauty we make no doubt, and the signs are not wanting that such an issue is near at hand. An illustration of resounding significance may be found in the work of the greatest of living Russians. The writings of Count Tolstoy, or to be more exact, the earnest attention which they have received during the past few years, offer an impressive example of the power of the social motive, as embodied in the forms of fictive art, to make itself felt as a force in literature. Here is a writer whose whole genius is spent in an impassioned appeal to purely democratic sympathies, and, as the years go on, his figure assumes grander and grander proportions, and his utterance seems to become more and more invested with the attributes of prophecy.

ENERGY AND ART.

Mr. Swinburne speaks somewhere of the distinction, which yet amounts to 'no mutually exclusive division,' between the gods and the giants of literature. Practically the same distinction is made by his friend, Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton, in the statement, which recurs frequently in the writings of the latter critic, to the effect that poetic energy and poetic art are 'the two forces that move in the production of all poetry.' The distinction is illuminating for the understanding of poetry, for these two forces are the fundamental elements of the effective appeal of literature, as, indeed, of all the forms of artistic endeavor. In the greatest of poets, to be sure, we find the two forces to coëxist in such supreme degree and perfect balance that they become, as it were, merely the two aspects of the phenomenon which we call genius, and we understand that for the highest achievements of literature the one is but the

necessary complement of the other. This is what we find in Shakespeare and Dante and Pindar, possibly also in Goethe and Milton. But when we view the work of the poets who just escape inclusion in the small company of the supreme singers of the world, we nearly always discover some preponderance of energy over art or of art over energy. As coming under the latter category, for example, we think of Sophocles and Virgil and Tennyson; while the former category embraces Æschylus and Lucretius and Victor Hugo. Taking a step still further away from the great masters, we meet with such fairly antipodal contrasts as are offered by Horace and Juvenal, by Spenser and Jonson, or by Keats and Byron. In these cases we have either art so finished that the energy has become potential, or energy so unrestrained that the art has been well-nigh ignored.

This thought may profitably be pursued into the domain of prose literature, and even, as was above suggested, into the field of the fine arts in general. The noblest prose—that of Plato, for example—has the same balance of energy and art that is displayed by the noblest poetry. On

the other hand, we have tremendous energy with but scant art in such a writer as Carlyle, well-nigh perfect art with but little energy in such a writer as Landor. In architecture, the Gothic style astonishes us with its energy, the classic style entrances us with its art. In sculpture, the one type is represented by Michel Angelo, the other by Thorwaldsen. In painting, the predominance of energy in Tintoretto is as unquestionable as the predominance of art in Raphael. And in music, while Bach and Beethoven stand for the Shakespearian harmony of both forces in their highest development, we may easily discern the overplus of energy in Liszt and Tschaikowsky, of art in Gluck and Mozart. The broad distinction between the classic and the romantic styles, which runs through all the arts, is, moreover, to a considerable extent, the distinction between these two primary forces under other names.

In a recent number of 'The Athenæum' there are some interesting remarks upon this subject as it is related to literary criticism, remarks in which it would be an affectation to pretend not to recognize the hand of Mr.

Watts-Dunton. 'It would be unseemly here to criticize contemporary criticism, but it may, without intending offense, be said that while the appreciation of poetry as an energy is as strong as ever in the criticism of the present day, the appreciation of poetry as an art is non-existent, except in one or two quarters which we need not indicate. . . . To go no further back than the time when Rossetti's poems were published, compare the critical canons then in vogue with the critical canons of the present day. On account of a single cockney rhyme, the critics of that period would damn a set of verses in which perhaps a measure of poetic energy was not wanting. The critics of to-day fall for the most part into two classes: those who do not know what is meant by a cockney rhyme, and those who love a cockney rhyme.' If this is true, it is a serious matter, for we are not content to share the non-committal position of the writer, who confines himself to saying: 'We merely record an interesting and suggestive fact of literary history. If in poetical criticism the wisdom of one generation is the folly of the next, it is the same in everything man says and

in everything he does, so whimsical a creature has the arch-humorist Nature set at the top of the animal kingdom.'

For our part, we believe that the appreciation of poetry as an art is essential to the very existence of criticism, and are far from willing to admit that it is non-existent at the present day. It is true enough that a great deal of verbiage about poetry issues from the 'blind mouths' of self-constituted critics who know not whereof they speak; but that has always been the case. Our writer himself makes the saving admission that the art of poetry still finds appreciation 'in one or two quarters which we need not indicate,' and that is probably all that might be said of the criticism of Rossetti's time, or of a still earlier generation. When we are well along into the twentieth century, it is precisely the criticism from these unindicated quarters that will alone survive, and will urge the writers of that period in turn to say things about the decay of criticism in their own time. The ineptitudes of the criticism that greeted the early work of Keats and Shelley, of Wordsworth and Tennyson, were surely as unfortunate as any utterances of the

present day, and, what is particularly to the point, they were lacking in precisely that appreciation of poetry as art for which Mr. Watts-Dunton seeks almost in vain in our current critical literature.

Having entered this protest against a statement that seems altogether too sweeping, we are now prepared to admit that a good many present-day facts lend countenance to the contention. Popular opinion naturally cares more for energy than for art in literature, for the obvious reason that it is stirred by the one and not easily susceptible to the appeal of the other. It feels the power of Browning, for example, and, although by long familiarity made dimly conscious of the exquisite art of Tennyson, is disposed to allow the one quality to offset the other, and consider the two as equally great poets. It is the same rough-and-ready sort of judgment that for a long time held Byron to be a greater poet than Wordsworth, that in our own time thinks of Tolstoi as a greater master of fiction than Tourguénieff, or that made Juvenal seem a greater poet than Virgil to the individual idiosyncrasy of Hugo, or Wordsworth and even

Byron greater poets than Shelley to the individual idiosyncrasy of Matthew Arnold. It is the sort of judgment that reaches the culmination of extravagance in the things that are sometimes said about Walt Whitman by the injudicious among his admirers. When we consider that Whitman's verses are not even what the worst of Browning's are — 'verses from the typographical point of view' — we may realize to what an extent criticism gone mad is capable of ignoring poetic art and resting its case upon poetic energy alone.

The reference to Arnold suggests reflections of a deeper sort. That the writer who was on the whole the truest and finest English critic of our generation occasionally went wrong, is well enough understood; and it is generally admitted that his dicta about Shelley constitute the most wrong-headed of all his utterances. Now the substance of his criticism was that Shelley's poetry is 'beautiful but ineffectual' — the passage is too familiar to need quotation in full, — and the implication clearly is that it is more important for poetry to be effectual — charged with energy, that is — than beautiful. This is

mainly interesting as going to show how a critic of the best type may be deluded by a formula, since this condemnation of poetry for being ineffectual is merely an application of the 'criticism of life' formula which gave a doctrinaire tinge to so much of Arnold's writing. We do not for a moment admit that Shelley's poetry is ineffectual — we have known too many young and generous souls to be moved by it as by a trumpet call — but we understand that its energy is so bound up with the loveliness of its art that the critic who is looking chiefly for the bearings of poetry upon conduct might easily be led — as Arnold was — to underestimate the energy in the presence of so dazzling an art. All of which goes simply to show that the critic who is bent upon finding the effectual in poetry may miss it for the very reason of an unworthy distrust in the beautiful. 'Beauty *is* truth,' but this does not mean that the truth need stick out at all sorts of angles from the beautiful structure.

On the whole, while there are some signs that energy gets more attention than art from critics nowadays, and while popular judgments

are based, as was always the case, upon little save energy in poetry, we are inclined to say that the only criticism that counts seriously does not notably disregard the claims of art. There are still men like Mr. Watts-Dunton and Mr. Stedman and M. Brunètiere to expound poetry to an incredulous public, and we do not recall that earlier periods have been much better served. And the same incredulous public remains, as it always did remain, mostly impervious to the doctrine of the critic, and continues to worship its false gods — occasionally blundering into worship of a true one, — comfortably thinks that it is enjoying poetry when it is only dazzled by rhetorical fireworks or dazed by sledge-hammer blows upon the brain, and gets a great deal of philistine satisfaction out of life generally, and regards critics as daft persons of most unaccountable tastes. And the beautiful remains the beautiful in all ages, its laws immutable and its strength sure, while some there be who find it out, and, not content to know it for their own enjoyment alone, bid others to the feast and help them to understand how, although

poetic energy by itself may accomplish much, conjoined with poetic art it may accomplish more, and that the abiding power of literature resides in its form more than in its force, or rather that the form alone can preserve the force from becoming spent in the hour of its birth.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE MIND.

In the history of architecture there have been two predominant types, the Greek and the Gothic. Each of them has undergone historical modifications, in accordance with the changing needs of mankind, but each has nevertheless remained true to its fundamental ideal. In the case of Greek architecture, that ideal has comprised unity of design, symmetry of construction, and simple definite relations between the several parts. In the case of Gothic architecture, it has meant more attention to detail than to the general plan, a disregard of severely proportioned lines, and a certain degree of confusion of aim. The difference between the Parthenon and 'the Bible of Amiens,' for example, illustrates a fundamental divergence of method and of aspiration; the two ideal types are here exhibited in the strongest of possible contrasts.

Transferring now our attention from the sin-

gle field of architecture to the broader domain of art in general, we find the same contrast of type exhibited wherever we look, although we broaden our terms to correspond with the wider view, and now say classical and romantic, instead of simply saying Greek and Gothic. The Parthenon is classical art, but so also are the 'Antigone' and the Hermes of Olympia and the Pompeian frescoes. So also are the fugues of Bach and the canvases of David, and the 'Hellenics' of Landor. On the other hand, Amiens cathedral is romantic art, but so also are the sculptures of Michelangelo and the plays of Shakespeare and the paintings of Rossetti. In some sense even, as a foreshadowing of the romanticism of the modern Christian world, the measures of Pindar and of Virgil escape from the restraints of the classical spirit, and take the freer range which we attribute primarily to the form of art which it was the province of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance to develop in all its fulness of creative splendor.

It does not seem to us an altogether fanciful analogy to find in the domain of the intellectual

life, as distinguished from the creative, a similar divergence of fundamental types. We find the intellect whose characteristics are unity and symmetry and definite relationship of activities; and we find the intellect with whose characteristics these are strongly contrasted, to which they are often diametrically opposed. In the first category we have the makers of systems, the men whose works exhibit an architectonic character so evident that our attention is directed to the coherent whole rather than to the separate details. That is, each detail, however significant in itself, becomes much more significant when considered in relation to the entire logical structure. Such an intellect keeps itself well in hand, restrains the tendency to capricious expression, is firmly based upon certain fundamental ideas, and brings every vagrant fancy wherewith it is beset to the primary test of this essential conformity. We recognize this type of mind in Euclid, in Aquinas, in Spinoza, in Kant, and in Mr. Herbert Spencer. In each individual case, we realize that the work must stand or fall as a whole, that, given a logical

method of procedure, it will stand if the foundations are sound, and that if they are shaky the entire structure must totter to its fall.

In the second of our categories we find those discursive intellects that are content to exhibit the separate facets of truth as it is revealed to them, that take sufficient satisfaction in its sparkling gleam, and make no effort to bring the light to a single focus. They feel instinctively that truth as a whole must be self-consistent, and leave to more sympathetic minds the task of reconciling seeming contradictions and of elucidating whatever appears paradoxical. Such minds, when actively at work, live intensely in the present moment, leaving the past and the future to care for themselves, and giving slight heed to the accusation of inconsistency. To this intellectual type we accredit Cicero (the epistolary and philosophical Cicero), Montaigne, Samuel Johnson (with all his crabbed prejudices), Voltaire, Hume, Ruskin, and Emerson. Probably the traditional classification which makes of all men by nature either Aristotelians or Platonists is not very different from that which we have here sought to indicate.

Each of these contrasted modes of the intellectual life has its own particular attendant dangers, and each needs the corrective influence of the other. In the former case, there is always the danger of doctrinaireism, of twisting the truth to fit the preconceived scheme, of seeking to demand acceptance by the sheer force of logical coherency. Reverting to our architectural figure, there is always the danger of magnifying the importance of the structure *qua* structure, and of the consequent failure to adapt it to human needs. In the latter case, there is always the danger of encouraging a lax mental habit, of holding the requirements of logic too cheap, of allowing the impulse or the emotion of the moment to usurp the sway of the sovereign reason. The resulting structure is apt to be comparable to one of these composite buildings in which the eye is engaged by many fascinating details, but in which it can take no satisfaction as a whole.

The natural bent of each individual who leads the intellectual life in any sort will fix the essential type to be aimed at. Each type has its peculiar satisfactions no less than its peculiar dangers. There are some who can conceive of

no other ambition than that which seeks to make life of one piece, to shape its intellectual activities into a consistent whole. Every new idea must be brought to the test of those already accepted, must be examined and reëxamined in the light of the principles that have been adopted as fundamentally important. This attitude toward truth is maintained at the cost of much strenuous endeavor, the severe repression of many a natural impulse, and the stern rejection of many a pleasing fancy. Viewed in retrospect, the reward seems sufficient; but it is hard to keep the chords of the mind strung to the requisite pitch, and the temptation at times becomes great to break loose from the stiffening bonds of prescription, and give unimpeded play to the faculties. Minds of the other type—and this is no doubt the prevailing one—are considerably freer in their activities, and thereby more receptive of new impressions. The hobgoblin inconsistency has no terrors for them; they are prepared at any time to take a new intellectual start, to ignore past conclusions, and to formulate fresh ones in accordance with the new light

in which some truth seems to stand revealed. The pure reason is no longer the sole dictator of thought, but shares its empire in some measure with the forces that control the emotional life. This attitude finds its satisfactions in the intense realizations of the moment which it permits, in the part which it allows to the sense of wonder, and in the ever-alluring prospect of coming upon new gateways of truth. To declare for one or the other of these attitudes is probably futile; each thinking mind finds its choice already made by the time the instinctive and unconscious period of thought is past. And whether the philosophy of conduct be built up by the logical method of a Spinoza or by the haphazard method of a Montaigne, the practical outcome is apt to be much the same with minds of normal endowment.

We have discussed these contrasting mental attitudes with reference to the individuals whom they primarily concern; let us in conclusion discuss them with reference to their influence upon the stream of human thought. In the long run, do the systematic thinkers determine the intellectual currents of history, leaving only its eddies

and surface-ripples to be shaped by the discursive thinkers? Our first thought is that they do. When we think of the immense authority, exercised for century after century, of an Aristotle or an Aquinas, it seems as if such were the only intellectual forces that have counted. But a little reflection will bring the counter-opinion into view, and make us doubt our hasty initial assumption. Systems have their day and become stripped of their authority, whereas no sincere expression of the human spirit, struck out in the glow of some moment of intense vision, ever wholly loses its validity. This is why the poets, on the whole, have influenced the thoughts of men more than the philosophers. We may take leave to doubt whether the 'Summa Theologicæ' has, all things considered, proved so potent and penetrating an influence upon religious thought as the 'De Imitatione Christi,' and we may confidently assert that, in the total reckoning, philosophical thought owes a greater debt to Plato than it does to Aristotle. The influence of the unsystematic writers is less imposing, but it seems to be farther-reaching than that of the architectonic thinkers.

It is, after all, the open mind that makes possible all intellectual progress, and the mind of the systematic philosopher has too often but a single outlook, which may be in the wrong direction, turned toward the fading past rather than toward the glowing future of human thought.

IDIOM AND IDEAL.

ELIZABETH BARRETT, in one of her letters to Robert Browning, asks him whether he considers 'the sailor-idiom to be lawful in poetry,' adding that, for her part, she does not. The reply runs as follows: 'The Sailor Language is good in its way; but as wrongly used in Art as real clay and mud would be, if one plastered them in the foreground of a landscape in order to attain to so much truth.' To all of this Miss Barrett assents, remarking further that 'art without an ideal is neither nature nor art. The question involves the whole difference between Madame Tussaud and Phidias.'

The question of æsthetics thus raised is one of peculiar interest to the present period, and has become far more burning than it could have been when the above correspondence was exchanged. There are few features of the recent literary situation as noteworthy as the large production and wide vogue of writings which

exploit some special form of idiom and rely for their main interest upon the appeal to curiosity thus made. The idiom of the sailor and the soldier, the rustic and the mechanic, have elbowed their way into literature, and demand their share of the attention hitherto accorded chiefly to educated speech. The normal type of English expression has to jostle for recognition with the local and abnormal types of the Scotchman and the Irishman, the negro and the baboo, and, in our own country particularly, with such uncouth mixtures as those of the German-American and Scandinavian-American. Examples lie upon every hand. We think at once of the 'kailyard' group of story-tellers, of 'Mr. Dooley' and Mr. Seumas McManus, of Mr. J. W. Riley and 'Charles Egbert Craddock,' and, foremost among all these phenomena, of the writings of Mr. Kipling.

An observer who looks beyond the momentary caprices of literary fashion is compelled to ask, in the contemplation of so great a volume of dialect and specialized jargon, whether this sort of work can claim to be literature in any high sense of the term. Does the speech of

Tommy Atkins and Marse Chan, the dialect of Drumtochty and Donegal, the locution of the Hoosier farmer and the Bowery tough, have anything of the antiseptic quality that preserves a story or a poem and enables it to delight successive generations of readers. The history of our literature is fairly instructive upon this point. With few exceptions, the writings of the past that have relied mainly upon their use of an abnormal idiom have passed completely out of the memory of men. It is true that such a novel as 'The Antiquary' and such a poem as 'The Northern Farmer' have assured places among the works that live, but how easy it is to see that their idiom is merely an accident of their production, and not the determining motive. They survive in spite of their departure from accepted modes of expression, and not in consequence thereof. But nine-tenths of our latter-day jargon-mongers have for their whole stock-in-trade some grotesque form of English speech; strip them of this, and the revelation of their poverty would be indeed pitiful. They offer novelty, and they amuse for an hour the novelty-seeking section of the public. A little later,

their books collect dust upon the library shelves, and the counter of the dry-goods store sees them no more.

The case of Mr. Kipling offers so typical an illustration of the proposition with which we are now concerned that it deserves close examination. We should be the last to deny the noble qualities of Mr. Kipling's art in its finer manifestations. While it almost never gives evidence of that *labor limæ* of which the really great masters are so lavish, its *primesautier* quality, its downright energy and superb emotional appeal, compel our admiration, and almost make us wish that the praise bestowed might be ungrudging. If we judge Mr. Kipling by his good work alone, as every poet has a right to be judged, he must be given a place among the dozen or so of living English singers who approach most closely the height now occupied in solitary eminence by Mr. Swinburne. As a writer of prose narrative he has taken a lesson from Bret Harte, and bettered the instruction. He is not one of the great novelists, but the best of his stories have a fair chance of being read well along in the twentieth century. So much, and possibly more,

must be accorded him by every sober-minded critic.

But between this measured and deserved praise on the one hand, and the wild acclaim of Mr. Kipling's present vogue on the other, there is a great gulf fixed. And when we come to inquire into the causes of the vogue, we find that it has little to do with his best work. It is the 'Danny Deever' sort of poem, and not 'The English Flag' sort of poem, which nine out of ten of his vociferous admirers have in mind when they proclaim him a poet after their own heart; and it is the Mulvaney sort of story, rather than 'The Finest Story in the World,' that they are really thinking of when they assert that he is first and the rest nowhere among story-tellers. A vogue that is based upon such judgments as these has a precarious vitality, and the reasons for which Mr. Kipling will be held in honorable literary remembrance are very different from those that determine his present popularity. It may be said that 'The Recessional' affords common ground upon which the man of taste and the groundling may stand in voicing the

praises of its author. This is, no doubt, a fine poem, although not without obvious faults, and it is greatly to the credit of the uncritical public that the poem found so responsive an echo in so many hearts. But when we find many of the same voices raised in praise of 'The White Man's Burden,' apparently not knowing the difference between the two, the situation 'gives to think,' as the French say. And when we hear 'The Recessional' recited approvingly by men who deny that their own nation should ever, no matter how greatly it has sinned, make the 'ancient sacrifice' of 'an humble and a contrite heart,' — by men, in short, upon whose lips such words are blasphemy, — we may see the difference between lip-service and sympathetic appreciation of a poem, and take at something like its true value the popular estimate of this particular poem and its author.

'The sailor language is good in its way,' as Browning said; but it is not the way of great literature. And the same observation holds true of the soldier language, and the locomotive-driver language, and the Anglo-Indian language.

'For it 's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Chuck him out, the brute!"
But it 's "Saviour of 'is country" when the guns begin to shoot;
An' it 's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' anything you please;
An' Tommy ain't a bloomin' fool — you bet that Tommy sees!'

This sort of thing is amusing, and vigorous, and even ethically sound; but it is not literature, for it does not square with the sober definitions. What, for example, has it to do with Mr. Morley's 'Literature consists of all the books . . . where moral truth and human passion are touched with a certain largeness, sanity, and attractiveness of form'? And what remotest point of contact does it have with this statement of Pater's abstract æstheticism: 'All art constantly aspires toward the condition of music — music, then, and not poetry, as is so often supposed, is the true type or measure of perfected art'? Not merely does the bulk of Mr. Kipling's work — and of the work of those countless lesser writers among whom he occupies a typical position — fail to become art in anything like this transcendental sense, but it does not

even seek to be art in the narrow sense that takes literature to be a self-contained process, with its own exclusive ideals. It does not aim to be ideal at all, but tries to outdo the rudest realism hitherto known. Reverting once more to Browning's trenchant comment, it plasters its clay and mud in the foreground of the landscape, and wins a cheap popular applause for its deftness, while the judicious stand apart and grieve at so violent a renunciation of idealism. For art, to be art at all, *must* be ideal. While it is true that

> 'Beyond that art
> Which you say adds to nature, is an art
> That nature makes,'

it nevertheless remains the duty of the artist to add to nature in the measure permitted by his imagination; failing in this task, or deliberately eschewing it, he is recreant to his calling, and his work has no excuse for existence.

THE REVALUATION OF LITERATURE.

Two recent numbers of 'The Atlantic Monthly' have included in their contents an essay well calculated to startle the readers, especially the older readers, of that conservative magazine. The essay in question is from the pen of a new writer, and is nothing less than a frank revaluation of the work of Emerson. Discarding, as far as possible, all traditional judgments, the attempt is made to estimate, from the broader because more cosmopolitan standpoint of these latter days, and in the light of a fuller knowledge than was in the possession of an earlier generation, the value of Emerson's contribution to American thought and American literature. Some of the conclusions reached by the critic are so far at variance with those that have long been seemingly crystallized in the histories of our literature that one rubs his eyes at the iconoclastic utterances, and wonders if anything is sacred

to these daring young men who are so busily engaged in bringing us new lamps to exchange for our old ones. It is not that the essay betrays animus, or is in any offensive sense an attack upon a great and cherished reputation, but rather that its writer has set about a *de novo* exposition, and has freed himself from the trammels of the conventional phrase and the conventional attitude. When we remember the indignation aroused in certain quarters less than fifteen years ago by the very qualified and cautious strictures of Matthew Arnold upon our beloved philosopher of the transcendental, it is a noteworthy sign of the times that the indigenous 'Atlantic' should open its pages to an estimate of Emerson compared with which the Arnold essay marks almost the extreme of laudatory and reverent handling.

It is not our present intention to examine this newest interpretation of Emerson, or even to express any very decided opinion upon its fairness, either in detail or as a whole. We doubt, indeed, if Emerson's warmest devotees in the past have ever given full expression to their real thought, or at least to the whole of their thought,

upon the subject. Their panegyric must have been accompanied by some mental reservations, for upon certain sides Emerson's mind was curiously limited, and in very obvious ways. But we may profitably seize the occasion for the purpose of a few reflections upon the provisional character of all contemporaneous literary judgments, and upon the necessity of such revaluations as the one now in question, before anything like finality can be hoped for. Can we never know, one is apt to cry somewhat despairingly, can we never really know whether the men of our own time, who so tower above the crowd, and to whom we bring the incense of our hero worship, are in fact men of stature fit to stand among the chosen of history? We can see that they are taller than the men about them, and can we not get their figures in such perspective with the figures of other generations that we may know how they will stand in the retrospective view of our descendants? Such questions as these are constantly arising in critical minds strenuous after absolute truth, and the attempt to answer them in the affirmative is as constantly baffled.

Yet there are ways, if one will but seek them, in which our judgment of the men living in our midst may be in a measure purified and brought into rough conformity with the judgments that will be recorded by posterity. If we would escape from the error of the personal equation, we may do so in part by cultivating a tolerance of opinions not our own; if the national or racial equation be (as it nearly always is) a source of error, we may largely eliminate it by consulting the judgment of intelligent men of other nations and races. But if we adopt the chauvinistic attitude in such matters, our case is quite hopeless. If we call all rational and balanced criticism that comes from abroad mere 'condescension in foreigners,' — if, what is worse still, we reply to every adverse English or Continental comment with a childish *tu quoque*, — we simply wrap ourselves up, head and all, in the mantle of provincialism, and barter our critical birthright for a little applause from the meaner spirits of our own day and our own Little Pedlington. There is more truth than is commonly realized in the saying that we may find a sort of contemporaneous posterity in foreign opinion. Then,

to approach the problem from another point of view, we find that in nearly all the cases in which some great writer has been ignored by contemporary opinion, there have not been lacking in his own time a few clear-sighted critics who have discerned the true quality of the neglected genius. Preaching to deaf ears in their own generation, these critics have found honor in the next, and shared in the posthumous praise that has come to the poets who got scant praise while they were alive. It may usually be found that in such unheeded utterances there is a note of conviction, a sense of absolute certainty that time will prove them to have been right. When we come upon such judgments, and realize, with our better light, how well-founded they were, we find it almost impossible to understand how they could have spent their force unechoed. We also learn that a genuine critical idea, however long may be the period of its gestation, emerges into active life in the end. Nothing could be more instructive for us, if we would escape the tyranny of the 'subjective criticism' that so colors and distorts the popular judgments of every period, than a careful study of the thought of

those men of the past whose intellectual habit has enabled them to anticipate the verdict of posterity; nothing could be more helpful than the endeavor to acquire something of their temper, and to transfer our standards to their objective plane.

In our age, however, the question which confronts us is the question of deciding upon relative values rather than that of discovering neglected genius. There are so many voices to-day, and so many organs of opinion, so strong a determination to let no new talent bud undetected, and so intricate a critical apparatus for the exploitation of every new literary development, that the world is far less likely than formerly to pass the strong man by, and the real critical danger lies in what has been wittily described as the 'cygnification of geese.' But time may be trusted to set these false classifications right, and that very speedily; while we may with equal confidence depend upon the same potent agency for the readjustments and the regroupings that determine for the reputations of the hour their final stations in the pantheon of fame.

The day seems to have come to attempt some

such readjustment of the positions of our older American writers, and the essay which has furnished us with our text is in this respect timely. Its very title reminds us that it is now sixty years since the traditional estimate of Emerson was given shape, and sixty years means two generations. One who follows the deeper currents of opinion can hardly fail to have observed that recent years have placed us in a more critical attitude toward the great men of our literary past, and that the old unquestioning acceptance has given place to a more searching and objective examination of their quality. As a result of this development of our critical temper, some men have gained and others have lost. Lowell and Whittier have, we should say, gained distinctly; and Hawthorne (considering his finest work) has still better stood the test of time. On the other hand, Emerson, considering the fetichism of which he was long made the subject in certain quarters, could hardly fail to lose, just as Longfellow and Bryant have lost. The friends of Lanier have almost made good his title to a place among our major poets, while

the friends of Parkman have been quite successful in securing for him the highest rank among our historians. As for the two men of genius at whose names American opinion has long looked askance, while European opinion has been lecturing us in clamorous fashion upon their greatness, we must say that the critical issue is still uncertain, with the odds rather in favor of Poe and rather against Whitman. But in these two cases, feeling is probably even yet too strong for judgment, and we shall have to wait until we get into some future generation 'where beyond these voices there is peace' before we shall know the definite status of either our *enfant terrible* or our 'good gray poet.' For one feature of the critical reconstruction now in full swing we may all be devoutly thankful, and that is the growing tendency to break down the artificial barrier between American and 'British' literature, the growing realization of the fact that, as men of essentially one blood and one speech, Englishmen and Americans are at work in the production of a common literature. Despite the occasional mouthings of literary jingoes upon both

sides of the Atlantic, the lesson is now fairly well learned that the standards by which we judge a Tennyson and a Wordsworth must be the same as the standards by which we estimate the worth of a Lowell or an Emerson.

THE GENTLE READER.

AMONG the many agreeable features of the holiday season, there is none more pleasant than the making of gifts. The truly human being, who feels himself no isolated unit in the total of conscious existence, but rather a creature linked to his fellows by the countless ties of sympathetic association, takes a greater delight in preparing holiday surprises for those who are dear to him than he does in the anticipation of the satisfactions that may reasonably be expected to accrue to his own existence. It is pleasant to dwell in thought upon the coming days of relaxation, with their good cheer for mind and body alike, but it is even more pleasant to make little plans for the happiness of others, and to select for them those small mementoes which mean so much for the tastes and the affections, however slight may be the estimate set upon them in the market-place. Among these remembrances, the tokens by which we express ourselves far more

effectively than by means of any words, there are none more important than books, for there are none that are possessed of so much of the spiritual or symbolic value that we should always seek to embody in our gifts. However limited may be our resources, they are sufficient to compass the procuring of the richest treasures of the spirit as it is revealed in literary art. Nor is there need to be ashamed of the setting provided for these jewels, for the arts that belong to bookmaking, as distinguished from the art of the writer of books, have grown increasingly worthy of their task, and so cunningly fit the page to the margin, so tastefully fit the cover to the pages, so harmoniously fit the decoration to the covers, that all the æsthetic sensibilities are gratified at once, and we marvel that it should be possible to offer so much of the product of refined taste at so absurdly a small price.

The majority of books, of course, do not meet these conditions, being strictly commercial products for the consumption of philistines; but the wonder remains that so many books should meet them so successfully; for to the book-lover of nice discrimination, after putting aside the count-

less impossible objects in the guise of books that are everywhere thrust upon his attention, there still remains the embarrassment of choice among the really desirable editions that offer him so much more than mere muslin and paper and print. Would he purchase a Shakespeare or a Dickens, a Walton or a Boswell, or even so modern a classic as a 'Marius' or an 'Omar,' he is fairly bewildered by the charms of at least three or four editions, each of which seems at the moment of examination more wholly desirable than any other. And when the choice is reluctantly made, his memory lingers regretfully over the claims of the rejected rivals for his favor, leaving him not quite sure that he has chosen wisely after all.

In making these remarks, we have had in mind, as chiefly deserving of consideration, the type of book-lover whom it was once the custom to designate as 'the gentle reader.' The type is an old-fashioned one, but it happily remains persistent, although seemingly crowded aside by the enormous recent expansion of the reading public as a whole. The gentle reader is essentially a reader of good old books rather than of ephemeral new ones. He is apt to look with suspic-

ion upon the celebrities that are exploited by publishers and newspapers day after day, and to give thanks that he has learned to eschew the counsel of these 'blind mouths,' that he has long since found his way to the perennial sources of literary enjoyment. He is still with us, for his tastes are still consulted by our purveyors of books, and the very publishers who strive eagerly with one another for the acquisition of the latest novels by the latest notorieties take also good heed to provide their lists with reprints of the old established favorites. The many libraries of standard literature which are so characteristic a feature of publishing at the present time surely answer to a genuine demand, and that demand as surely testifies to the fact that the gentle reader is insisting that his interests shall not be neglected.

We had just got fairly started upon this train of reflection when we came across an analysis of the tastes and the temper of the gentle reader so genial and so sympathetic that we were tempted to make a forced loan for the relief of our own poverty of expression. This temptation overcome, we must at least make a reference to the article by the Rev. Mr. Crothers in 'The

Atlantic Monthly,' which reveals to the gentle reader his own true self, and explains the workings of his mind so delightfully that even the reader of another sort may come to understand something of it, and experience yearnings to be himself numbered among the gentle. But if we may not borrow from Mr. Crothers, we will at least borrow from the Rev. Henry Van Dyke, who has also paid his compliments to the gentle reader. After dismissing the 'simple reader' and the 'intelligent reader' as obviously hopeless, this writer sets forth the characteristics of the gentle reader so charmingly and with such insight that we at once feel sure that he knows whereof he speaks.

'The gentle reader,' he says, 'is the person who wants to grow, and who turns to books as a means of purifying his tastes, deepening his feelings, broadening his sympathies, and enhancing his joy in life. Literature he loves because it is the most humane of the arts. Its forms and processes interest him as expressions of the human striving towards clearness of thought, purity of emotion, and harmony of action with the ideal.'

But better than any characterization of the gentle reader — better even than Dr. Van Dyke's analysis, is the concrete example offered by many

a man of letters who has taken the public into his intimacy, and helped us to feel and to share his delight in good literature. Emerson and Lowell, Lamb and FitzGerald, were gentle readers of the most typical sort, and their success in the vocation was complete. When Mr. James Lane Allen interrupts the course of a novel to bring in whole pages of Malory, we instantly know him for a gentle reader. Others, again, seem to have the desire to be gentle readers, but the true vocation is lacking. Mr. Ruskin was too intolerant of opinions not his own to become one, and Mr. Frederic Harrison, try as hard as he may to get in, is kept outside the sanctuary by what may be called the strenuosity of his positivism. He makes a valiant plea for all good books, but we feel while he is making it that they have appealed to his intelligence, and indirectly, by virtue of their significance for the history of culture, and not directly by virtue of their quality of deep human sympathy.

On the other hand, we know FitzGerald as a genuine member of the guild from almost any random page of his familiar correspondence. By way of *bonnes bouches*, and as the best possible illustra-

tion of our text, let us close by extracting a passage or two from the letters in which his quality as a bookman is most clearly exhibited.

'I am now a good deal about in a new Boat I have built, and thought (as Johnson took Cocker's Arithmetic with him on travel, because he shouldn't exhaust it) so I would take Dante and Homer with me, instead of Mudie's Books, which I read through directly. I took Dante by way of slow Digestion: not having looked at him for some years: but I am glad to find I relish him as much as ever: he atones with the Sea; as you know does the Odyssey — these are the Men!'

'I wonder whether old Seneca was indeed such a humbug as people now say he was: he is really a fine writer. About three hundred years ago, or less, our divines and writers called him the Divine Seneca; and old Bacon is full of him. One sees in him the upshot of all the Greek philosophy, how it stood in Nero's time, when the Gods had worn out a good deal. I don't think old Seneca believed he should live again. Death is his great resource. Think of the *rococosity* of a gentleman studying Seneca in the middle of February 1844 in a remarkably damp cottage.'

'I cannot get on with Books about the Daily Life which I find rather insufferable in practice about me. I never could read Miss Austen, nor (later) the famous George Eliot. Give me People, Places, and Things, which I don't and can't see; Antiquaries, Jeanie Deans, Dalgettys, &c. As to Thackeray's, they are terrible; I really look at them on the shelf, and am half afraid to touch them. He, you know, could go deeper into the

Springs of Common Action than these Ladies: wonderful he is, but not Delightful, which one thirsts for as one gets old and dry.'

'Of course the Man must be a Man of Genius to take his Ease, but, if he be, let him take it. I suppose that such as Dante, and Milton, and my Daddy, took it far from easy: well, they dwell apart in the Empyrean; but for Human Delight, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Boccaccio, and Scott.'

It is worth while to be able to read books in the spirit of the writer of these passages, worth while even at the expense of a few crotchets and a certain amount of irrationality. And it is also worth while to learn the lesson of FitzGerald's absolute sincerity in stating his likes and dislikes. If our personal judgments are in line with the established verdict of criticism, well and good; but if they are not, there is no virtue in pretending to the contrary. The gentle reader, at least, whatever his faults, knows the things he likes, and they are pretty apt to be the things that the world has agreed with him in liking.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE NOVELIST.

DURING the greater part of the nineteenth century the novel has been the most distinctive of literary forms. Historians of literature have so amply recognized the fact and critics have so copiously moralized over it that the subject has become almost as hackneyed as that of the weather. The Puritan prejudice against novel-reading, once almost as potent as the Mohammedan injunction against graphic portrayal of the human form, has so completely vanished from the general consciousness of the public that we look with curious wonder at the belated preacher who still here and there voices a protest that would have found much support a generation or two ago, and that now falls upon absolutely unheeding ears. We read novels nowadays as a matter of course, just as we go to the theatre and eat mince pies, although all of these practices were condemned by the sterner morality of our forefathers. And not only do we read

novels without compunctions of conscience, but we are actually encouraged to read them by those to whom we look for intellectual and spiritual guidance. Our high schools and colleges prescribe courses in novel-reading, and our clergymen take them as texts for their sermons in a sense very different from that in which they used to be taken by gentlemen of the cloth trained in the traditions of an older school.

While nineteenth-century readers have been, as a class, almost universally addicted to the fiction-habit, there is no reason for thinking that the readers of the twentieth century will be any the less so addicted. Philosophical critics sometimes tell us that the novel will run its course and be replaced by something else, just as the drama and the poem and the essay have at other times and in other lands run their respective courses, and lapsed from favor. But these critics do not give us any very definite forecast of what the coming literary fashion is to be, and the novelist meanwhile snaps his fingers at all such iconoclasts. He simply keeps on producing what the public wants, with small regard for the opinions of those who tell us what the public ought to

want. He has ridden upon the top wave of prosperity to the very verge of a new century, and it is his evident intention to carry into that century the practice of the arts whereby his conspicuous fortunes have heretofore been achieved. Nearly all the prizes of the literary life come to him, and he finds it very pleasant to have them. Yachts and villas and other expensive luxuries are within his reach, and he looks down with patrician pride upon the poor poet in his garret, or upon the mere thinker whose intellectual work is done in the hours that can be spared from the uncongenial toil upon which he must depend for subsistence.

A reflective person, contrasting the position of the popular novelist with that occupied by the scholar whose strenuous pursuit of truth receives but slight recognition from his generation, can hardly refrain from a certain indignation at so unequal a distribution of the gifts of fortune. The fiction-writer who succeeds in catching the popular ear finds his path made easy ever thereafter. Intellectually he may be one of the feeblest of mortals, yet the halo of fame encircles his head for the time, and he

may with comparative impunity wax oracular even upon subjects of which he is most densely ignorant. On the other hand the quiet thinker must struggle to get an audience, even for ideas which he is perhaps the best-qualified man in the world to express, and may count himself fortunate if his laborious days earn for him an existence of the most precarious and exiguous sort. He does, indeed, take comfort in the assurance that his work is done for a posterity that will have forgotten the very name of the writer who now basks in the sun of popular favor, and in this faith may find strength to scorn the delights of the present day, but his task is none the less a thankless one, and the age is none the less dishonored that makes it such. Think, for example, of what the world has done for Mr. Rider Haggard and Mr. Herbert Spencer. A few novels, considered as literature almost beneath contempt, have earned for the one many times over what has been earned for the other by the forty years that have gone to the building up of one of the most imposing and substantial edifices of thought ever added to the possessions of mankind. Doubtless,

this material view of the reward of effort is not the only view that should be taken, but the lives of most men are so hedged about by material limitations and conditioned by material necessities that it must be reckoned with in determining the balance of justice between every man and his contemporaries.

If the triumph of the novelist were a condition that concerned only the best producers, there would not be so much cause to rail at the degeneracy of an age that exalts the writer of fiction over literary workers of other classes. Fiction, at its highest, is one of the noblest of the arts, and it would be difficult to bestow recognition too generous upon a Scott or a Thackeray, a Balzac or a Tourguénieff, a George Eliot or a George Sand. Bnt the deserved triumph of such writers is attended by an absurdly exaggerated estimate of the hosts of the undeserving. The whole mass of contemporary fiction benefits by the lift given the art by its masters, few in number as they are. And the best writers are by no means the most successful. Mr. Hardy and Mr. Meredith are far less popular than Mr. Hall Caine and Mr. Rider Haggard, although the latter are

mere bunglers, while the former, for all their perversities, are artists of distinctive genius. The attitude of our present-day public towards fiction-writers as a class encourages the notion that anybody knows enough to write a novel, and this notion, which might otherwise be harmless enough, is made perniciously effective by the publishers, who make it possible for almost anybody to get a novel printed. And so we have every year new novels by the hundreds, by the thousands, novels that have not the slightest claim upon any genuine intellectual interest, preposterous inventions that can only blunt the artistic sense of those who are foolish enough to read them, exploitations of every variety of diseased fancy and perverted imagination, guides to the conduct of life by young persons who know nothing of life themselves, books written with no higher aim than amusement that are too dull even to achieve that aim, productions of incompetent scribblers who might have found honest employment in farming or in housekeeping, and made their activities of some real use to society.

Professor Brander Matthews, in an entertaining essay, draws an ingenious parallel between

the art of novel-writing and the game of whist. Dr. Pole recognizes four stages in the evolution of whist, the Primitive Game, the Game of Hoyle, the Philosophical Game, and the Latter-day Improvements. Four stages, not dissimilar to these, may be recognized in the evolution of the novel. Professor Matthews dubs them the Impossible, the Improbable, the Probable, and the Inevitable stages. The 'Arabian Nights,' 'Les Trois Mousquetaires,' 'Vanity Fair,' and 'The Scarlet Letter' are given as examples of the four kinds of fiction. But, just as all four forms of the game are still practiced by different sets of players, the later having failed to displace the earlier ones, so all the four forms of fiction are still produced by different sets of writers, and each still finds its own public. The parallel is interesting, and reasonably justified by the facts, but its formulator should have added that there is, and always has been, a fifth kind of fiction, corresponding to the variety of whist known as bumblepuppy. And our pride in the developments that the art of fiction has unquestionably made during the last half-century must be considerably tempered when we reflect that the great

mass of modern novels comes from writers who do not play the game in accordance with the rules of any system, primitive or philosophical. In a word, the ascendancy of fiction in our latter-day literary production is not altogether the mark of a heightened appreciation of art. The triumph of the novelist is, to a considerable degree, a triumph of ineptitude over ability, of lower over higher ideals, of slovenly over painstaking workmanship, of incoherence and disproportion over measured and organic art.

THE REVIVAL OF ROMANCE.

An attentive reader of a certain issue of 'The Dial' must have noticed the fact that no less than three of the chief contributions to that issue frankly espoused the cause of romance as against the claims that have been put forward so strenuously of recent years in behalf of realism. This conjunction of opinion was purely fortuitous and unpremeditated, and may for that reason be taken as a really significant sign of the times. When the critic wrote of Cyrano de Bergerac as a heroic figure presented 'to a world which is all ready to enjoy romance once more'; when the essayist sought to analyze 'the ordinary and the commonplace to see why they fail to afford materials for great art,' and concluded by saying that he could not 'conceive of anything more useless than a literature which reproduces life without a background of thought and imagination'; when the poet personified triumphant Romance returning to her own, and saying:

'Since of the oldest dynasty am I,
Delight of life within my gift doth lie;
The heart of man, of woman, and of child,
Without me were to fate unreconciled.
A space hath Human Fashion banished me;
But Human Fashion will soon wearied be!
I only wait the unfed heart's recall,
To take my place — my place supreme in all,'—

All three, critic, essayist, and poet alike, were expressing, each in his own language, essentially the same truth, the truth that Art must better Nature and transcend it unless it is prepared to abdicate its ancient empire.

The new romanticism, as was also pointed out by at least one of these writers, is not quite the same thing as the old, for it has learned something from the rival by which it has been for a time supplanted. What it has learned is the Shakespearian lesson that

'Nature is made better by no mean,
But Nature makes that mean: so, o'er that art,
Which, you say, adds to Nature, is an art
That Nature makes. . . . This is an art
Which does mend Nature — change it rather: but
The art itself is Nature.'

When we speak of the prospective or accomplished revival of romance, we do not mean the sort of the thing that satisfied the eighteenth

century. 'The Castle of Otranto,' and 'Melmoth the Wanderer,' will hardly serve as prototypes of the new product — atavism cannot go as far as that — but the romanticism that is now carrying literature before it is a form of art that, like the giant of Greek fable, gains renewed strength from contact with the earth. The romancer is no longer privileged to live in the clouds, or to dispense with the probabilities, but he is nevertheless constrained to idealize and ennoble those aspects of life with which he is concerned, and to view them, not with the scientist, through a microscope, but with the philosopher, *sub specie æternitatis*.

The terms realism and romanticism have been so bandied about in critical discussion, have been made so hackneyed by indiscriminate use, that we hesitate to drag them forth once more from their decent veteran retirement. And, as we have frequently maintained, they almost wholly lose their special signification when we seek to apply them to literature of the first order. It is the shallowest sort of criticism that will be content to label the 'Inferno' as realistic and 'Hamlet' as romantic. Where, as in the case

of the world-masterpieces, we are in the presence of the sheerest Vision, the tint of the glasses and the index of their refraction become matters of small importance. It is only upon a lower plane of literature that the distinction between realism and romanticism actually exists; it is a distinction hardly to be made, for example, between Scott and Balzac, or between Tourguénieff and Hawthorne; but it may properly be drawn in a discussion of Stevenson and Mr. Gissing, or of Black and Mr. Howells. It is a distinction that exists only because of a one-sided development or a defective artistic endowment.

It seems to us that the signs are multiplying upon every hand to show that the star of this narrower realism is waning, and that the world is once more coming to its own in the ideal realms of the imagination. Indeed, when we think of the other arts, of painting and music for example, the sort of thing that we are accustomed to call realism appears as a belated parallel of the work that found favor in those arts a generation or more ago. It illustrates merely an *überwundener Standpunkt*. When we think how far painting has got beyond Frith and the 'Derby Day,' when

we reflect upon the full meaning of the Wagnerian triumph, we may with small difficulty, if we are anything of a prophet, foresee the time when men shall look back upon the petty realism of the past score of years with mild wonder at the thought that it should ever have been taken so seriously, with no other feeling than the curious interest that we bring to the contemplation of such passing vagaries of thought and taste as the history of civilization reveals by the score. The aim of art always has been, and always must be, to get away from the details of life and to 'overhear' its essential expression, to arrange ideal categories for familiar facts, to make them symmetrical, to classify, and, beyond all else, to exclude.

What are some of the signs that realism has not 'come to stay' in our imaginative literature? It may seem as if M. Zola had the 'cry' just now in France, but this is the most superficial view imaginable. He has notoriety enough, no doubt, but the sources whence it springs will be dried up in a few years, and then the bulk of his work will sink out of sight by its own specific gravity. Who ever wanted to read 'L'Assommoir' or 'La Débâcle' a second time, except from

some motive secondary to that of the satisfaction that their first reading gave? But we recur with delight to Hugo and Dumas and George Sand, and no custom can stale *their* infinite variety. Why have Mr. Sienkiewicz and Signor d'Annunzio achieved lasting reputations in their respective countries? The former has done it by the pure romanticism of his genius, and the latter in spite, not because, of his over-insistence upon sordid facts. Why are 'Johannes' and 'Hannele' and 'Die Versunkene Glocke' the most striking things in recent German literature? Simply because they strike the note of idealism once more. Why are the careers of Herr Björnson and Dr. Ibsen so illuminative for our thesis? Because each of these great men presents in epitome the artistic experience of the generation. That is, because each of them began his work in the purest romantic spirit, was for a time led astray into the morass of realism, and is now groping his way back to the sunlit meadows of idealism. And because the former of these men never got so far from the true path as did the other, the totality of his work will, in the final estimate, be held the greater and more enduring.

In England and America the swing of the pendulum toward romanticism is equally evident. The exceptional delicacy and charm of their workmanship is all that keeps us reading the successive productions of Mr. Howells and Mr. James. They no longer produce any kind of a thrill; the force by which they once produced it is spent. In the work of Mr. Meredith and Mr. Hardy the elements are so mixed that a definite classification is difficult, yet when we reflect upon what we best remember in such books as 'Richard Feverel' and 'Jude the Obscure,' it is easy to conclude that their authors are most effective when least realistic. In our more popular fiction, every form of romance is illustrated. There is the emotional romance of 'The Christian,' the fantastic romance of the 'Zenda' books, the mystical romance of 'Aylwin,' and the historical romance of 'The Seats of the Mighty.' Other examples, equally typical, might be adduced by the score. Such are the books that the public delights to read, and their production is coming to outnumber overwhelmingly all the other kinds of story-books. The romantic revival is at full tide, and contem-

porary literature bids fair to offer us once more the solace that it brought us of old. We have learned that it is extremely foolish to insist of a writer that he give us all the facts connected with his theme. We have learned the limitations of literary photography, we have learned that it is unwise to approach literature burdened with a sense of responsibility for the preservation of the literal truth and the obtrusion of the ethical meaning.

THE GREAT AMERICAN NOVEL.

In one of the most exquisite symbolical tales to be found among American writings, Hawthorne has dealt with the entertainment of angels unawares, emphasizing a situation as old as literature, as old perhaps as the mythology that lies back of literature in the childhood of the world. Readers of 'The Great Stone Face' will remember how it was prophesied that the features carved in the granite of the mountains should one day find their counterpart in warm flesh among the inhabitants of the Franconian valley, and how the hero of the story, looking forward to the fulfilment of this prophecy, suffered repeated and bitter disappointment as one famous man after another failed to meet the test, himself all unconscious that a life of helpful toil and noble aspiration was gradually shaping his own features into the desired likeness, and his neighbors all unwitting of the fact that the long-heralded incarnation of the Great Stone Face had

dwelt in their midst from his birth. It has ever been the fashion of prophecy, from the days of the Delphian oracle down to our own, to get fulfilment in unexpected ways; and it is possible that the Great American Novel, of which the appearance has so long been prophesied, may already have come into existence. Many an American critic, jealous for his country's literary repute, and eager to assert the final emancipation of 'these States' from all old-world tyrannies of the ideal, has sought to discern in the works of one American novelist or another the typical expression of a distinctly American civilization. But, unless all preconceptions based upon a broad survey of literature are misleading, we are forced to disallow the pleas of these over-zealous advocates, and to admit that we have not yet produced any novelist really representative of American society in the sense in which Balzac is representative of French, Thackeray of English, and Tourguénieff of Russian society. Original and charming novelists we have, indeed, in considerable numbers, and they have filled our literary picture-gallery with successful studies of *genre*, and fragments of romance, and

bits of quite praiseworthy realism, and fictions of character and manners in the greatest variety. We have also the full flower of Hawthorne's genius, and may rest assured that neither the art nor the depth of 'The Scarlet Letter' will be far surpassed by the best of those who may rise up in the future. But the Great American Novel must be broader in scope, if it cannot be truer in art, than this tragic idyll of Puritan New England, and so the title still seems to await its properly authenticated claimant.

Assuming, then, that the Great American Novel has not yet appeared, and that prophecy about it is still admissible, let us venture a few suggestions concerning its coming and its character. We may safely say that it will not come with observation. It will not be heralded by the puff preliminary, nor will hosts of rival publishers struggle for possession of the manuscript. When it is given to the public, we shall not be regaled with columns of ingenuous gossip about the personality and habits of the author, nor will advance extracts be scattered far and wide to whet the appetite for the whole *magnum opus*. It will be the book of neither the day nor the month. Its

originality will puzzle reviewers, and, unable to fit it into any of their neat pigeon-holes, they will, for the most part, damn it with faint praise, or treat it with flippant contempt. We call to mind a novel published in this country a few years ago, which was accorded very much the sort of reception just outlined. If it did not exactly 'fall flat' from the press, it at least aroused slight enthusiasm, and soon seemed to have run its course. Yet the position of the book in question has grown stronger from that day to this. With little help from the organs of publicity, it has steadily enlarged its circle of readers, and ten years from now will probably be reckoned among the noteworthy books of the quarter century. We shall not name it, for it is not the Great American Novel, although it has some of the qualities which we expect will characterize that work when it appears; but its history will help us to understand the manner in which that eagerly-anticipated production is likely to make its way. The Great American Novel will be borne to fame by no surface ripple of fancy, but by a strong undercurrent of intelligent appreciation; it will not win its readers by wholesale, but one at a

time, and each new reader will act as a new centre of propagation. When it has at last really found and won its fit audience, it will probably become the fashion also, and its name will be upon the lips of fools, for this penalty of genius is always exacted sooner or later.

So much for the manner of its coming: let us now ask what the Great American Novel will be like. Since it is to be American, it must needs reflect the democratic principle upon which American society is organized. It cannot rely upon the artificial distinctions of the older civilizations to give variety to its characters, but must fall back upon the distinctions of mind and heart that are inherent in human nature. In other words, it must command a deeper psychology than the European novelist needs to give interest to his book. Without being in any way polemical, it must be imbued with the passion of democracy, based throughout upon the stout-hearted conviction that democracy is the only rational form of government, the only system of social organization that has logical finality. But this implicit democracy which informs the book must be purified from the faults and the excesses of the demo-

cratic spirit as now manifested in our national life. It must be a democracy that is freed from arrogance, that has substituted idealism for its present dull materialism, and that has learned the lesson of reverence.

We should say that the political motive must figure among the leading motives of the Great American Novel. Without being a political novel pure and simple, it must give adequate expression to an instinct in the possession of which even the Greeks did not surpass us, an instinct which is in the very marrow of our bones. It may be to superficial seeming a novel of domestic concerns, yet it must receive color and strength from the political motive, and thereby touch one of the most responsive chords of our national consciousness. Its ethical motives must be worthy of a nation whose civilization is based upon Puritanism, and whose history is a standing testimony to the assimilative force of Puritan ideals. It must give to social phenomena their true ethical rating, and exalt—to use Schopenhauer's classification—'that which one is' above that which he possesses, or that which he appears in the popular

estimation. It must make the reader feel how far the true aristocracy of heart and intellect overshadows all the sham aristocracies of wealth and of social position won by 'smartness,' that distinctively American vice. It must enforce — but always by implication rather than precept — the Goethean lesson that he alone deserves life and freedom who wins them day by day; and the other Goethean lesson — so peculiarly applicable to a country where degenerate sons so often take the place of sturdy ancestors — that we must earn anew the inheritance left us by our fathers, if we would really possess it.

That some such ideas as these should inform the novel that shall be a reflection of what is best and deepest in American life seems an almost inevitable deduction from our national history and circumstances. But the Great American Novel must be no mere setting of philosophical abstractions. It must, it is true, strike deep root in the soil that the centuries have prepared for our civilization, but it must at the same time be a concrete and vital presentation of certain individual lives as they are lived, or conceivably

might be lived, at the present day. Such a novel is under bonds to be an epic of individualism, for democracy, if it means anything, means *la carrière ouverte aux talents*, means the fullest opportunity for the development of the individual. Our imagined work must have a hero and a heroine, each a typical figure; and it would be a fascinating task to attempt their characterization in outline. But this task would savor of creation, and is not for the critic to assume. Yet we will go so far as to borrow from the poets two suggestions, one for the man, the other for the woman. Is it too much to say that Emerson adumbrated the hero of our search when he wrote the simple lines that stand as a motto for the essay on 'Culture'—

'Can rules or tutors educate
The semigod whom we await?
He must be musical,
Tremulous, impressional,
Alive to gentle influence
Of landscape and of sky,
And tender to the spirit touch
Of man's or maiden's eye:
But, to his native centre fast,
Shall into Future fuse the Past,
And the world's flowing fates in his own mould recast.'

And may we not fancy our heroine to be the realization of such a type as is foreshadowed in the closing pages of Tennyson's 'Princess,' such a woman as shall set herself to the hero 'like perfect music unto noble words,' yet remain as distinctly woman as he is distinctly man?

THE NOVEL AND THE LIBRARY.

THE great preponderance of works of fiction among the books drawn from public libraries has always been a subject of much concern to librarians and other men engaged in the business of public education. It comes up for discussion perennially, and various are the suggestions made for the correction of what is generally recognized as an evil. While there is nothing to say against the practice of reading fiction, abstractly considered, there is much to say against the novel-reading habit which seems to be fastened upon the majority of those who use our public libraries. When the statistics of circulation show that works of fiction constitute from fifty to eighty per cent of the books that are taken for home reading, there is certainly some reason to think that the library is regarded as a source of entertainment rather than of public education, and some reason to question the wisdom of taxing the people at large for such a purpose. Even if careful

consideration of the whole subject convinces us that a library, put chiefly to such uses, is better than no library at all, and still on the whole a worthy object of public support, it is certainly obligatory upon those who control the supply of free books to use all possible vigilance in minimizing the evil of thoughtless reading, and in encouraging the literary and studious tastes of readers.

Very often the statistics themselves disguise the evil which they connot wholly conceal. A library which reports sixty per cent of fiction among the books circulated will very likely report also from ten to fifteen per cent of juvenile literature (most of which is fiction), and from five to ten per cent of books in foreign languages, of which novels form the larger fraction. Some librarians regard this condition of affairs with complacency, and, while seizing every opportunity that is offered to encourage the reading of serious books, still hold to the view which was advocated by the late W. F. Poole — the view that most of these novel-readers would read nothing at all unless they could get what they wanted, and that it is well for them to acquire

the reading habit even if a wiser judgment disapproves of their habitual selection of books. There is much to be said for this view, and for its corollary that the exercise of the reading habit in any form tends to bring about a gradual elevation of literary taste, especially if the reader be supplied all along with gentle and unobtrusive incitements to the acquisition of better standards and broader interests. This sort of stimulus has to be applied tactfully, and it is a distinctive characteristic of the good librarian that he knows how to apply it with judgment and without ruffling the reader's temper. The natural man, who has outgrown the years of tutelage, resents being practised upon by others for his own good, and, although he may be led to the water, he must be left to believe that he is drinking it of his own volition.

The subject of fiction in the public library has recently come up for renewed discussion in connection with a report from Springfield, Massachusetts, according to which the librarian, during four years, has reduced the circulation of fiction by about one-fourth. This may not seem strange news to the general reader, but to those who know

anything of library work from its professional side, the report is so startling that it seems almost sensational. One librarian says it is what Lord Dundreary would have called a 'staggerer.' Experience shows the percentage of fiction to be so nearly uniform from year to year that a change of as little as five per cent would excite comment. Naturally, then, a change (and for the better) of something like five times that percentage is a cause for both surprise and curious interest. By just what means so great a reduction of novel-reading has been brought about we do not know, but so gratifying a result is sure to excite the spirits of both inquiry and emulation in the breasts of librarians all over the country.

There are many devices of the obvious sort for the lowering of the percentage of fiction and the raising of the percentage of serious reading, and these have been used by all good librarians in the United States during the quarter-century that librarianship has been recognized as one of the professions. They include such things as the limited supplying of novels and the liberal supplying of better books, the publication of annotated and descriptive lists upon special subjects, the coöper-

ation of librarians with teachers in the work of the schools, the opening of the library shelves to easy access on the part of the public, and the judicious use of personal counsel on the subject of reading. But there seems to be a rather narrow limit to the efficacy of any of these devices, or of all of them together; if they have proved adequate to effect the reduction reported from Springfield, the case is as surprising as it is exceptional, and few librarians will be hopeful of accomplishing similar results by such means. What we wish now to consider are certain methods of a farther-reaching and more radical sort that have either been put into operation of late years here and there, or that have been suggested by the recent revival of interest in the discussion.

Mr. Herbert Putnam, who by virtue of his official position is the leader of the profession of librarianship in America, makes a suggestion that may be pronounced radical, but that commends itself to the sober intelligence after the first shock of surprise is over. It is, simply, that no works of fiction be purchased by public libraries for at least a year after publication. Nothing could be more sensible than the following words:

'There is, however, a demand for fiction which I do not believe can legitimately be met by the public library. That is the demand for the latest new novel merely because it is the latest new novel. We all read current novels also and enjoy and profit by them. But the demand for them is largely artificial, for a purpose merely social, and it is apt to be transitory No free library can meet it adequately, and the attempt to meet it is an expense and annoyance to the reader and expense and burden to itself.'

The exclusion of the newest fiction from the library shelves would doubtless occasion a great outcry, but the loss to the public would be more imaginary than real. Every librarian knows how hollow is the pretence of meeting the popular demand for the novels of the day. To supply that demand would entail an expenditure that no librarian could sanction. Take such a novel, for example, as 'The Crisis,' and such a library, for example, as that of Chicago. Probably five hundred people were daily clamoring for that particular novel during the weeks that immediately followed its publication. To satisfy them, it would have been necessary to purchase several thousands of copies, with the absolute certainty that next year they would be collecting dust upon the shelves, if not actually consigned to the

lumber-room. The satisfaction of an ephemeral fancy of this sort is an absolutely illegitimate demand to make upon any public library. The only library that has a right to spend money in this reckless fashion is the private enterprise of the Mudie type, which exists for the special purpose of catering to the taste of the moment. What such a library as the Chicago institution actually does in the case of a novel like 'The Crisis' is to purchase forty or fifty copies of the work, and supply one applicant out of every two or three hundred. 'In proposing to supply such a novel,' says Mr. Putnam, 'the library deludes the public and reduces its capacity for service really serviceable.' It does not really supply the demand, and succeeds only in gratifying an occasional applicant at the cost of creating exasperation in the breasts of the thousands who, knowing that the book is in the library, ask for it from day to day until they desist from sheer weariness.

We are inclined to think, on the whole, that every public library would be well-advised in adopting Mr. Putnam's suggestion, thus forcing its patrons to take, as far as the library is con-

cerned, Emerson's well-known advice against reading books that have not kept alive for at least a year. Using 'The Crisis' once more for our illustration, it is safe to say that in a few years the demand for that excellent story will have fallen to normal proportions. It will still be asked for by a few people, and it will be as proper to provide copies to be read as it is proper to provide copies of 'The Spy.' This, of course, presents an extreme case, for, besides the two or three novels that a capricious public marks for its favor every season, there are two or three hundred others of merit sufficient to entitle their claims to be recognized. But the reasoning to be employed is similar in all the cases; the demand for current fiction is essentially temporary and artificial, and it is doubtful if it be the policy of wisdom to put into a public library any books for which there may not be some reasonable demand year after year.

The librarian who is unwilling to make himself disliked by refusing to supply the public with current novels may find a sort of way out of the difficulty by adopting a plan which has already been successfully operated in a few

places. This is the plan of opening a special department of new fiction, buying enough books to meet the demand, and making a small charge for their use. The doctrinaire objection that all the services of a public library must be free may be met by stating the obvious fact that this particular service is impossible unless it be made self-supporting. The fee might be a very small one — much less than that charged by private libraries — and yet sufficient to make the books thus circulated pay for themselves. The average novel costs the library rather less than one dollar; it may be in constant use for a year or more before it is worn out; if it is made to bring in two cents a week during that year, the transaction will be fair to all parties — no appreciable burden, certainly, upon the reader, and no burden upon the budget except on the score of library service. At the end of the book's career, it will have provided entertainment for possibly fifty families, at practically no cost to the library; it will have paid for itself, and may be thrown away with a good conscience. If the public library is, in any real sense, to provide its patrons with the latest novels, we believe that this is the

only legitimate way of doing it. But we are sufficiently tainted with the educational theory of the library to think Mr. Putnam's plan, after all, the one better deserving to be pursued.

The two suggestions thus considered are the only ones that go to the root of the matter. Other suggestions are of the nature of ingenious devices or persuasive methods. One of the best of them is the two-card system which gives every card-holder the right to draw two books at the same time, only one of which may be a work of fiction. This encourages collateral reading of the serious kind, and is said to secure good results. Practical librarians are now generally learning how much good may be done by such things as open shelves, special bibliographies of timely interest, talks with teachers and school children, object-lessons in model collections of standard literature, the encouragement of clubs and study-classes, and the judicious selection of the fiction that is provided for circulation. These means are all praiseworthy, and are, in their aggregate employment, productive of marked benefit. And, in all this discussion, it must not be forgotten that the reading of good

fiction is something more than entertainment, that it is a study of one of the great forms of creative literature, and one of the most potent agencies whereby the sympathies may be quickened, the horizon enlarged, the higher interests aroused, and culture attained. We have forever passed the day when thoughtful people could condemn the reading of fiction as such; we have come to understand for good that the best novels are among the best books there are, however much we may deprecate the reading of the shallow and sensational sorts of fiction.

THE DRAMA AS ART.

EVERY now and then, the consciousness of that section of the public which is provided with such uncomfortable things as ideals becomes stirred to the pitch of indignation in contemplation of the degradation to which some form of artistic endeavor is subjected by the hard conditions that a commercial age ever seeks to impose, and usually succeeds in imposing, upon the production of the art in question. At one time it is literature, at another music, at still another painting that comes up for discussion; again, thanks to the stimulus of a lecture by Mr. Israel Zangwill, it is dramatic art upon which the fierce light of criticism beats. That the art of the playwright will be bettered by this light — or, to vary the metaphor, by the destructive distillation of the accompanying heat — is more than doubtful; but it is well that some one should from time to time call public attention sharply to the low estate into which the stage has fallen, for if the ideal find no spokesman

when hardest pressed, its condition is indeed hopeless. Mr. Zangwill, who has thrown himself bravely into the breach, deserves warm gratitude for what he has been saying, and we trust will keep on saying, for the substance of his contention is of demonstrable nature, and the eternal years of God belong to the truths that are being given so pointed an expression.

Like all speakers of the unvarnished truth, Mr. Zangwill finds that his message is anything but acceptable in many quarters. To say nothing of the wounded susceptibilities of dramatic managers, and of the men who fabricate the kind of play that the managers want, the journeymen who write 'dramatic criticism' for the newspaper press are quite comically outraged by his outspoken remarks. Many of them have been saying much the same thing, in a more guarded way, all along; but they profess themselves outraged by the antics of this bull in the china-shop of modern vaudeville, and cheap farce, and tawdry melodrama. They would roar you as gently as any sucking-dove, but they would not for the world speak the plain truth in plain words; and as for the scintillating words and keen thrusts that flash

from Mr. Zangwill's armory, they are wholly incapable of forging and wielding the needed weapons. Indeed, the lot of these gentlemen who write about the nightly happenings of the stage is no pleasant one. They have to deaden whatever artistic conscience they may possess, to invent euphemistic phrases for the characterization of bad plays, to pretend that the contemporary English stage is interesting when they know in their heart of hearts that it is not, and, above all, to simulate a virtuous and fiery indignation when some dramatist of genius traverses the petty conventions of an artificial seemliness and probes human life to its depths. The treatment accorded to Dr. Ibsen during the past ten years by nearly all newspaper critics stands in everlasting and shameful evidence of their shallow incompetence as a tribe.

We are glad, then, that Mr. Zangwill has stirred the waters in which these criticasters disport themselves, and has called widespread public attention to a few home truths concerning plays and playgoers. He has said nothing new about the subject — there is nothing new to say — but he has placed a pretty wit at the service of a few

of the old ideas, and some of his observations are pointed enough to pierce the utmost thickness of the Philistine hide. There is penetrative energy in such phrases as the following: 'The modern receipt for a successful play is a paying compound of snivel, drivel, and devil.' 'The old actors are dead and buried, but the plays are dead and printed. You can buy them at the price of eggs, twenty-five cents a dozen, and they are mostly bad.' 'The critic no more represents the simple and occasional playgoer than a congressman represents the baby he kisses.' The taste of these sayings is dubious, but an exhibition of bad taste is no new thing to Mr. Zangwill's readers. Free from this reproach are such acute sayings as these: 'Irving's respect for Tennyson is unique in the history of the stage — and of Irving.' 'Ibsen's ink often runs in the veins of his characters.' 'The French stage has never lost its literary tradition. We have legitimatized its children, we have turned its intrigues into flirtations; but such virtue has its own reward.' The lecture from which these excerpts are made is a sort of Gatling gun of epigrams, and its deadly fire is

sustained for more than an hour with but brief pretermissions.

The essential contention of this censor of a degraded art is that our playmongers are apt to forget that it is a form of art with which they are concerned. When we think what the drama has been as a factor in civilization, when we recall the noble uses to which the stage has been put in other times and lands, when we reflect upon the possibilities, for instruction and edification, of the play which is conceived as something finer than a means of amusement, we cannot but view with contempt the English play which we get from the theatrical syndicate and the 'bad shopkeepers' of Mr. Zangwill's invective. And when we realize that the drama is still treated as a fine art in France and Germany, in Spain and Italy, in Russia and Scandinavia, while in the English-speaking countries alone it has fallen to a level which makes meaningless any mention of art in its discussion, we may well bow our heads with shame. This is a general truth of which there is no effective denying, for the occasional manager of high ideals and the occasional play

of literary quality serve only to emphasize the pass to which the majority of plays and managers have come. It is no more than the simple truth to say that our audiences do not want ideas in their plays; they want costumes, and tricks of stage-carpentry, and farcical situations; they are hugely delighted by a catchy song or an utterly irrelevant dance; they will tolerate sentiment if not too delicate, and even passion if its origin be not too deep within the soul; but ideas they will not have on any terms.

Is our popular artistic standard lower in matters pertaining to the stage than it is in matters that concern the other forms of art endeavor? Mr. Zangwill thinks that it is; but we are not so sure. It is popular taste in 'literature' that makes possible the existence of the class of newspapers that so disgrace American civilization. Surely the stage, at its basest, can do no worse than that. If we seem to set up a higher standard for books than we do for plays, it must be remembered that the bad play forces itself more obtrusively upon public attention than the bad book. People view the former in public, as it

were, and it is discussed in the public press; whereas the latter is read in private, and the critic usually ignores it altogether. Beneath the lowest stratum of books that are thought deserving of mention by newspaper reviewers, there is a still lower stratum that makes up the chief reading of countless thousands of people, as far as they read books at all. But the theatres that provide the corresponding forms of cheap sentiment and vulgarity are conspicuous in the public eye, and have their place in the daily or weekly theatrical summaries. We doubt, then, very much if the taste of the real public be any better in its reading than in its acting. When we consider music, painting, and sculpture, much the same principles hold true. As in literature, so in the case of these arts, we can never learn what the masses really like, because we cannot readily catch them (as we can at a theatre) in the act of what stands to them for æsthetic contemplation. But from the popularity of certain forms of music, and of certain forms of the graphic arts, — forms in which imbecility and vulgarity seek to outrival each other — we may at least shrewdly

surmise that the taste of the dear public is here, as with books and plays, in almost equally evil case.

Yet when all is said, one important consideration remains. In literature, the finest forms of art are accessible to everybody. This statement is also measureably true of music, and painting, and sculpture. One can to a considerable extent come to understand the ideals of these arts by the study of photographs and scores. At all events, the large cities afford actual examples of the highest achievements of these arts. But even the large cities rarely, if ever, afford to the spectator examples of what the art dramatic at its highest can do. They may show us marvellous stage-effects, but they do not show us sincerity of purpose and unity of artistic endeavor. In this respect, it is true that in England and America the drama stands upon a lower level than the other arts. We can all read the greatest literature at home; we can often hear the greatest music perfectly performed; we can view some of the greatest works of painting and sculpture in the originals and all of them in trustworthy

reproduction; but we cannot witness such productions of the great plays as are to be witnessed in the theatres of the European Continent. Our productions may cost a great deal more, and be more dazzling to most of the senses, but they do not make art their foremost consideration, and they justify the reproach that in our time has fallen upon the English-speaking stage.

THE ENDOWED THEATRE.

THE recent visit of Mr. William Archer to this country, for the purpose of making a close study of theatrical conditions on our side of the Atlantic, has resulted in a highly instructive series of papers for the English periodical which commissioned him to make the investigation, and has also called fresh attention to, and evoked fresh discussion of, a number of old questions connected with the art of the dramatist and theatrical manager. Mr. Archer is himself peculiarly well-equipped for such a task as he has undertaken. Among English dramatic critics he occupies a high place. He has both knowledge and soberness, and these qualities combined make him a far more significant writer of dramatic criticism than the effeminately whimsical Mr. Beerbohm, the sensationally sentimental Mr. Scott, and the audaciously paradoxical Mr. Shaw. Even the writing of Mr. Walkley, brilliant and fascinating as it is, lacks the solidity of Mr. Archer's criti-

cism, because it does not seem to be as firmly based upon the fundamental principles of dramatic art, or as widely conversant with the modern literature of the play.

Among the many evils connected with the English-speaking stage of our own time, Mr. Archer marks out the 'actor-manager,' the 'star system,' and the 'long run' for his most emphatic denunciation. In the address which he gave in this country before the Twentieth Century Club of Chicago and Columbia University of New York, he sought to answer the question, 'What can be done for the drama?' and bore down upon these three evils with much weight. We imagine, however, that for his audiences upon these two occasions he was slaying the slain, for our cultivated public hardly needs to be persuaded that stars and long runs and actor-managers are directly inimical to all artistic endeavor for the betterment of our theatrical conditions. We are as familiar as Englishmen are with the bad influence of these things, — or, if we have not suffered as much from the actor-manager, we have for our very own the additional evil of the 'theatrical syndicate,' which more

than tips the scale (this to be taken ironically) in our favor.

We must, however, hasten to dislodge from the minds of our readers the notion that Mr. Archer was merely destructive in his criticism. Nothing could be farther than this from the truth. Unlike Mr. Zangwill, our English visitor of a little earlier date, who dealt with the same general subject of the low theatrical estate of England and America, Mr. Archer had definite things to propose. And if his address was without the pointed epigrams and the flashes of humor that made Mr. Zangwill so entertaining a speaker, it provided ample compensation for the lack of those superficialities in its rational suggestions, enforced as these were by examples of what other countries have actually 'done for the drama.' In a general way, Mr. Archer was for the establishment of an endowed theatre, but with a difference from the usual speculations upon this subject, in that the suggested endowment was to be private rather than municipal, a matter for the voluntary enterprise of subscribers rather than for the forced enterprise of tax-payers. Considered from the point of view of probability, we agree

with Mr. Archer in looking forward to a private rather than a public endowment, although we think it would be entirely proper for the municipality to act in such a matter. And we need hardly remind our readers that we have always advocated the endowed theatre, as we have always urged the desirability of the endowed newspaper. One of these days, moreover, the idea is going to take practical shape in the mind of some philanthropist, who will prefer to make his gift to the public in this way rather than to establish a new hospital or art gallery or public library.

Mr. Archer spoke at considerable length of the successful way in which certain German theatres — notably the Deutsches Theater of Berlin and the Volkstheater of Vienna — have dealt with this problem of supplying the 'inner public' — the public which wants good art, which demands that ideas shall be set above accessories in its plays — with its dramatic entertainment. There is no reason why such theatres, the product of endowment and subscription, should not be duplicated in our own country, and even prove successful as commercial enterprises, no reason, that is, unless it be that our own 'inner public'

is not large enough. There is the rub, no doubt. The German public, the French public, the Italian public, the Scandinavian public, all contrive, in any city of considerable or even moderate size, to support a stage in healthful activity, and this is just what the English public has hitherto failed to do. They have a good inherited tradition; we have cared so little for ours that we have lost it altogether. Mr. Henry Fuller, who has said some unpalatable things about our lack of artistic aptitudes, would probably observe (in his not too serious way) that it is not in us, racially or temperamentally, really to care for dramatic art, or to foster it in the fashion of the Continental peoples. Perhaps it is not; but the experiment is worth trying, and as long as it remains untried, we shall have hopes. The saving element of the situation may not impossibly come from the fact that we are not as English a people as our name implies; that we have so much admixture of other strains as to make the case a new one, not to be judged by the analogies of the past. Our immigrants often practice segregation themselves, but their children become pretty well blended into the common

American nationality, and who can tell *a priori* just what aptitudes and potentialities will characterize the resulting race.

What we want of our stage, and what we believe will be given us at no distant day, at least in our largest cities, by endowment or otherwise, is, in a word, this: We want a playhouse with no stars, no popular successes, no waste in the form of expensive unessentials. We want upon the boards of this playhouse a body of trained and conscientious actors, capable of playing many parts every year, bound to the institution both by loyalty to its fundamental idea and by such material inducements as shall insure an honorable career and a comfortable retirement. We want this playhouse to have a repertory of the most varied sort, catholic enough to include every *genre* of meritorious dramatic writing, but rigorously excluding what is sensational, childish, or merely vulgar. We want it to present the classical drama of English and foreign literatures frequently enough to give those who wish it an opportunity to become acquainted with the masterpieces of ancient and modern dramatic art. We want it to be constantly on the lookout for

promising works by new writers, extending to them the frankest recognition, yet never making a fad of any one of them, or any school of them. We want it to be both grave and gay, a place to which we may resort for diversion and for edification alike. We want it to be a place in which young persons may learn something about life, and acquire standards of taste, yet a place from which young persons should sometimes be excluded, not by administrative prescription but rather by the judgment and discrimination of their elders. Finally, we want it to be a place in which, while nothing is neglected that will heighten the legitimate interest of the drama, ideas shall be paramount to all other considerations in the selection and the mounting of the pieces to be produced.

It does not seem to us that the plan thus outlined is beyond the range of the immediately practicable. In New York and Chicago certainly, in Boston and Philadelphia possibly, the public that desires such a theatre is large enough to justify its establishment. There must be thousands of people in those cities who would support such a theatre to the extent of from ten

to one hundred dollars each, every year. What is needed is the organizing power necessary to bring these people into coöperation, with possibly the stimulus of the provisional gift of a site and a building. We notice that Mr. Howells, while commenting on the whole favorably upon this suggestion, seems to think that the well-to-do class of people who would control the management of such a theatre might impose a censorship inimicable to the free development of the drama. 'In a theatre founded or controlled by them, no play criticising or satirizing society could be favored,' he says, and instances 'An Enemy of the People,' 'Arms and the Man,' 'Die Weber,' and 'Die Ehre,' as plays that could not hope for presentation. This seems to us the merest bugbear, and the force of the criticism is certainly not increased by the reference to 'what has happened in some of our higher institutions of learning.' Mr. Howells make a much happier suggestion when he finds an analogy between the subscription theatre and the subscription lecture organizations which exist in many parts of the country, and which, for a moderate fee, give themselves 'the pleasure of seven or eight

lectures during the season, from men who are allowed to speak their minds. With a subscription of twenty-five dollars they could have as many plays, from dramatists who also spoke their minds; and if the experiment were tried in ten or twenty places, we should have at once a free theatre, where good work could make that appeal to the public which it can now do only on almost impossible terms.'

M. BRUNETIÈRE'S PEDAGOGICAL PRESCRIPTION.

THE visit to this country of M. Ferdinand Brunetière is one of the most important 'literary' events of recent years. In significance and influence, it may be compared only with Matthew Arnold's visit of fifteen years earlier; for M. Brunetière is as distinctly the first of living French critics as Arnold was of English critics then living. This does not in either case mean — it never means — that any one man can be an absolute ruler in the critical domain, or that all of his judgments must be taken as finally authoritative. But it does mean, with both the Englishman and the Frenchman, that an unusually successful effort to eliminate the personal equation, and to see things as they absolutely are, has invested the judgments of these two men with a degree of authority hardly to be claimed for any others of their generation.

In one of his New York lectures, M. Brune-

tière said that no one had followed more anxiously or more disinterestedly than himself the French literary movement of the past score of years. He then added, in a passage which may be taken as the keynote of his entire critical career:

'The first condition of disinterestedness is never to follow one's tastes, and to begin by distrusting the things which give us pleasure. The most delicious dishes are not the most wholesome; we never fail to distinguish between our cooks and our doctors. In the moral world the beginning of virtue is to distrust what is most natural to us, and the same is true in the intellectual world. To distrust what we like is the beginning of wisdom in art and literature.'

These words represent so accurately what has always been our attitude toward the fundamental doctrine of criticism that we hardly need, in so many words, to express our concurrence with M. Brunetière in this all-important matter. That the value of literary work must be determined with reference to law and not to caprice, that the only valid critical judgments are those which are free from the taint of subjectivity, and that personal opinion represents only a rudimentary stage in the development of criticism, are propositions that mean substantially the same thing,

and that it is the first duty of the critic to recognize and to justify. What is commonly called 'subjective criticism' may be, and frequently is, reading of the most delightful sort, but it is not criticism in any real sense, for its aim is the illumination of the recesses of the writer's own mind, rather than of the work held up for examination. It is always pleasant to follow the play of a finely sensitive intellect about some production of literary art, but it does not help us, except in a very roundabout way, to understand that production in its essence.

The function of opinion in criticism is precisely what it is in any other branch of science. It assists in the framing of hypotheses, which may, in their turn, lead us by tentative paths to the truth. But to make of opinion an end in itself is a procedure as grotesquely inadequate in æsthetics as it would be in physics. What would be the present position of natural science if its masters had remained content with their neat hypotheses, and had spared themselves the arduous tasks of modification by experiment and of ultimate verification? Gravitation and evolution and the conservation of energy were once matters

of opinion, with no binding force whatever. If Newton and Darwin and Helmholtz had been content to put these things forward as opinions, the world would soon have forgotten their names. But the opinions became unquestionable truths when they were enforced by the application of a rigorous scientific method, and we honor the men who established them for the very reason that those men knew the assertion of opinion to be but the beginning of knowledge.

It is doubtless true that the science of æsthetics offers a peculiarly difficult field for investigation, and that critical opinion often requires a long time to ripen into knowledge. But we must not for that reason imagine that there is any finality of opinion, that its character is other than transitory or provisional. The subject may be illustrated by the history of the reputation of every great writer who has been long enough before the public to acquire recognition among the fixed stars of literature. M. Brunetière took Racine for the special illustration of this thesis.

'M. France said: "We know only ourselves. Whatever you are trying to explain, you are only expounding yourself. Shakespeare alone has known Shakespeare."

I answered M. France that his argument that we cannot go outside of ourselves proves too much, as it applies to our knowledge of the physical world as well as to our knowledge of other minds, and I added that one of the men who knew Victor Hugo least was Victor Hugo. M. Lemaître says: "I have an opinion of Racine. You have another. Good, that makes two. Perhaps there is another; that makes three. There may be an infinity of them. Why should one submit to another? It is much more amusing to have three opinions of Racine than one, still more amusing to have an infinite number." I answered M. Lemaître that no doubt there were several opinions about Racine, but that he, the master, with his elegant, "malicious," and subtle spirit, exaggerated the differences of human opinions. It is certainly agreed that Racine is a great man, that he is a higher dramatic genius than Voltaire, for instance, and a lower one than Corneille, and such general agreements are all we need for our kind of criticism."

Here the discussion ends, as far as Racine is concerned; but the speaker might easily have gone on to show that the position of Racine is not thus fixed merely because of a practically unanimous consensus of opinion, but that this consensus itself is the resultant of forces by which the judgment of every serious critic is more or less consciously determined, that it follows from the very laws of literary art.

A writer in the New York 'Nation' has

undertaken to traverse this fundamental doctrine of M. Brunetière's creed. Taking for his text the very paragraph that we quoted at the beginning of the present article, he says that the 'analogy of the delicious but unwholesome dishes is a little misleading.' He then goes on as follows:

'The primary object of eating is to nourish the body, not to please the palate. . . . With the work of art, on the other hand, pleasingness, in the broad sense of the word, is the final test of excellence. Its usefulness is to please. There is no higher court of appeal, no doctor with exact scientific tests who has a right to pronounce it good though disagreeable, or bad though acceptable to the taste. It is true that the moralist often arrogates to himself this right, but he is only a fallible brother expressing an opinion. One is a moralist one's self.'

The shallowness of this reasoning is so apparent that it need not be taken very seriously. It is the old plea for hedonism transferred to the plane of æsthetics, and is defended by the old familiar logomachies. We are quite content to admit that æsthetic law can have no higher claim to authority than moral law, and should even have been willing to allow that the moral law was the better defined and the more firmly grounded of the two. 'One' may be 'a moralist one's self,' if he please, but the consequences of this sort of

individualism, if put into practice, are likely to be distressing. So, in æsthetical matters, one may be a critic one's self, to his heart's content, but his position, if he set up his private judgment against the collective judgment of the best informed in a succession of generations, will not prove exactly comfortable.

But our individualist critic practically abandons his own position in a passage that soon follows:

'Of course this reasoning does not apply to the young, whose tastes are in the formative stage, or to the mentally indolent who have never reflected on their own tastes. In the interest of education such persons may very well take to heart the maxim to distrust their own taste. But it is hardly to be supposed that M. Brunetière meant to offer a pedagogical prescription."

Is it not? In our opinion, that is precisely what M. Brunetière did mean to offer. Most people are either young or mentally indolent as far as the appreciation of literature is concerned. To like a book is one thing, and to know whether or not it is a good book, and why, is quite another thing. It is the natural man whom M. Brunetière seeks to warn, not the man of trained perceptions and sympathies. We presume that M. Brunetière has a great deal of confidence in

his own likes and dislikes, the reason being that a strenuous process of analysis has transferred them from the plane of prejudice to the plane of deliberate and reasoned judgment. And it is just because he knows so amply from his own experience how great is the difference between a prejudice and a judgment, between the likes and dislikes of the natural man and those of the critic whose historical sense has been developed by the widest reading and who has learned to substitute scientific method for empiricism, it is just because of these facts that he offers us the 'pedagogical prescription' so much needed in this country, which has as yet produced but little critical writing in the high and true sense of that term.

THE CRITIC AS PICKER AND STEALER.

CERTAIN of the abuses of contemporary periodical criticism are energetically set forth by Mr. William Knight in 'The Nineteenth Century.' Mr. Knight's paper is entitled 'Criticism as Theft,' and discusses the various forms of filching, more or less disguised, by which the journalistic hack gets the attention of the public, and profits at the expense of those upon whom he preys. The author sometimes strains a point to bring the abuse with which he is at the moment occupied under the category of robbery, as when he says that the author who makes a valuable contribution to literature is entitled to a reward, and adds: 'If the return of that reward is prevented by capricious, or ignorant, or reckless criticism, the critic has stolen from the author, quite as truly as if he had robbed him of his purse.' But if this practice is not theft, it is something quite as bad, and deserves all the cen-

sure bestowed upon it. 'The robbery of a just reputation is much more serious than is the theft of money, or of material property; and the unjust praise and the false dispraise of the critic is one of the worst kinds of theft that this world has had to endure.' Coleridge took much the same view of this matter when he thus characterized critics of the wantonly malignant type:

'No private grudge they need, no personal spite:
The *viva sectio* is its own delight!
All enmity, all envy, they disclaim,
Disinterested thieves of our good name:
Cool, sober murderers of their neighbor's fame.'

The abuse becomes even more serious when not merely ignorance or reckless flippancy, but partisanship or personal bias inspires the review of some book. This is what Mr. Knight says about it: 'Many a review — philosophical, political, scientific, theological, and literary — has hitherto been tainted with this bias. An *a priori* judgment has been passed on the merits of a book which the critic had not read. It has been judged by its title, its contents, its preface, or its author's name. Every literary man must have seen scores of such notices, pert, opinionative, shallow, useless; or, on the other hand, fulsome,

and therefore worse than useless.' We may once more back Mr. Knight's opinion with a passage from Coleridge — this time a prose selection, but for that none the less vigorous in its impeachment. 'As soon as the critic betrays that he knows more of his author than the author's publications could have told him; as soon as from this more intimate knowledge, elsewhere obtained, he avails himself of the slightest trait *against* the author; his censure instantly becomes personal injury, his sarcasms personal insults. He ceases to be a critic and takes on him the most contemptible character to which a rational creature can be degraded, that of a gossip, backbiter, and *pasquillant:* but with this heavy aggravation, that he steals the unquiet, the deforming passions of the world into the museum; into the very place which, next to the chapel and oratory, should be our sanctuary and secure place of refuge; offers abominations on the altar of the Muses, and makes its sacred paling the very circle in which he conjures up the lying and profane spirit.' Anyone who has occasion to do much reading in contemporary criticism may often discern between the lines of

a review some such syllogism as the following: No person holding certain opinions upon politics, or art, or religion, can possibly say anything worth heeding upon any subject whatsoever. N. N. is a person holding such opinions. This book of his upon, let us say, hydraulic engineering, must therefore receive short shrift and no mercy. This illustrates, it is true, an exaggerated form of the evil under discussion; a more common form is that in which some unimportant passages in the book, obnoxious to the critic, are singled out for attack, while the substance of the work is utterly ignored.

Another form of current 'criticism,' which comes nearer than those as yet mentioned to being theft in the literal sense, is thus described by Mr. Knight: 'A critical "notice," written to display mere deftness or nimbleness of wit, ingenious repartee, power of sarcasm or rejoinder, is not criticism at all. Suppose a nimble-witted person skims a book; turning its pages in a listless mood, he finds some information that is new to him. He notes this, and goes on to read more. He finds some errors, and then proceeds to use the information, which he has received

from the book itself, against its author; just as a clever surface society-talker, wholly ignorant of a subject, can often "pick the brains" of one who knows it, while he is speaking, and give him back in a torrent of verbosity the very ideas he was slowly and modestly expressing.' There is a good deal of this sort of fraudulent criticism afloat, and some writers acquire a critical reputation based almost wholly upon the cleverness with which they succeed in 'showing off' with the subject of some book for a text. The passage just quoted reminds us of an incident recently related. A journalist who had seen a good many varieties of life at close quarters spent an evening with an eminent novelist. After a while, the novelist said to his guest: 'I want your opinion of a story I have just written.' The story was read, and approval duly expressed. 'But,' said the journalist, 'the substance of your story seems strangely familiar to me.' 'Yes,' replied the novelist, 'you told me the story yourself.'

Perhaps the only sort of 'criticism' that may in the strictest sense be accounted theft is that in which the reviewer relies mainly upon the reviews already published by others of his craft.

To parade as one's own the opinions of others, to catch the drift of criticism as expounded in the more authoritative journals, reproducing its leading ideas in slightly altered form, is a practice for which no defence is possible. The critic who takes his profession seriously will, of course, carefully refrain from reading what others have said of a book until he has framed his own independent judgment of the work in question, and even then will have to be constantly on his guard to resist the natural impulse to make his dicta conform to those which he cannot keep from filtering into his consciousness in a hundred insidious ways. Even the shifting currents of public opinion upon the larger aspects of literary art are a constant source of danger to the critic, however conscientious he may be. When current literature shows a distinct trend toward realism, or romanticism, or didacticism, or sexualism, it is difficult to avoid being swayed by the movement, however fixed may be the critic's canons, and however stoutly he may be prepared to do battle for the lasting as against the ephemeral. We still get a good deal of bell-wether guidance, even from the best-intentioned, for critics are as gregarious as

other people, and find it quite as hard to run counter to the prevailing literary fashions.

With one part of Mr. Knight's argument we are unable to agree. He condemns the review which is frankly descriptive and extractive on the ground that it is a theft from both author and public; from the former because it injures his sales, from the latter because it deprives of the opportunity of knowing, 'in its integrity,' what the author has to say. It is a curious logical twist that can find robbery in the act of summarizing a book for readers many of whom are too busy to get at it in any other way. As far as our observation goes, such *précis*-writing stimulates rather than retards the sale of the books selected for treatment; the persons who are content to accept the part for the whole are mostly those who would never dream of purchasing the book concerned, while, on the other hand, the number of those who are by a skilful summary made curious to know the book, and actually purchase it, make up many times over for the few who might have become purchasers had it not been for the friendly offices of the reviewer in selecting for them enough of its contents to

satisfy their curiosity. So far are we from deprecating this form of review, that we wish there might be a great deal more of it. More, perhaps, than from any other cause, popular criticism suffers from the feeling of the critic that, however lacking in knowledge, he is bound to take the judicial attitude, and, instead of giving his readers an idea of what the book is really like, he must express a decided opinion upon its merits. As it is obviously impossible for the newspaper reviewer, called upon to deal with books upon all sorts of subjects, to have an opinion of any value concerning most of them, it would be a decided improvement for him to remain content with the descriptive summary that almost any fairly intelligent person can make. In other words, the work of judical and authoritative criticism should be left to the reviews that can command the services of hundreds of specialists, and are known to entrust to competent hands the books sent to such reviews for examination.

A WORD FOR MINOR POETRY

THE flood of verse that is produced in these latter days, and that somehow finds its way into print, offers a subject for serious reflection to the student of literary phenomena. Nothing like it was ever known before, since there never before was a period in which mastery of the elementary technique of verse was so common a possession among workers with the pen. Every now and then we learn with surprise that some famous scholar, whose reputation rests upon strictly prosaic achievements, has often had recourse to the composition of poetry as a recreation, and has long been dabbling in the art of rhyme and metre unknown to any but his most intimate associates. A few years ago, Mr. Lecky published a volume of verse that delighted all of its readers except those who based their sapient judgment upon the *a priori* grounds that so great a historian could not possibly have the poetical gift; and it was still more recently

that a posthumous volume by the late Professor Romanes showed us that the scientific habit of thought by no means precludes possession of the sympathies and the sensibilities that are requisite for the production of very acceptable verse. Even the dry light in which the world appeared to a man of Huxley's temperament did not prevent him from penning one of the most striking of the many poetical tributes evoked by the death of Tennyson. Then, besides the occasional men of eminence in other intellectual fields who from time to time surprise us in this agreeable way, there are the writers — a very numerous host — who have no other distinction at all, but who every year swell the list of those who must be reckoned with when we estimate the choral forces of English song, far removed as they may be in both aim and achievement from the select ranks of the soloists.

The existence of this choir invisible — that is, invisible to the gaze of the general public — is a fact persistently borne in upon the consciousness of the closer student of contemporary literature. The reviewer of books, in particular, whose task it is to make some sort of assessment of

from one to two hundred volumes of new verse every year, is acutely aware of this multitude of singing voices, and, unless he be hopelessly committed to a standard of judgment impossible to apply in such cases, is bound, in simple fairness, to recognize the sweet and sincere quality of many of the notes sounded, although he knows well enough that these notes will never penetrate very far into the popular consciousness. If he be honest, his attitude toward these bards struggling to make themselves heard will not be inspired by a fine Horatian scorn of poetical mediocrity so much as by the feeling that a good deal may be said in behalf of poetry that is not too bright and good for human nature's daily food. There are hours — and many of them — in our lives when we are content to browse upon the meadowlands of song, and leave the peaks unscaled. Even the poets that dwell upon the lowest slopes of Parnassus may offer some food for our spiritual sustenance.

The term 'minor poetry' is of comparatively recent origin, and indicates a definite realization of the fact that there is a difference, not of degree merely, but of kind, between the singer of the

age or the race and the warbler of the hour or the coterie. The distinction between the two is reasonably well marked, although in the nature of the case no hard and fast line of demarcation can be drawn. There are always some poets 'on promotion,' as it were, poets whose place we cannot quite determine because of the heated controversies occasioned by their work. Whitman, for example, was for many years in this condition of suspense, and now, long after his death, it is quite impossible to say whether he is a minor or a major poet. Mr. Kipling may be taken as a living illustration of this uncertainty of classification. Then there are occasionally mute inglorious Miltons, as far as the larger public is concerned, who nevertheless are both vocal and glorious in the estimation of the cultured few. But the distinction between major and minor poets is worth making, in spite of the difficulty of dealing with a few exceptional reputations, and it is coming to be seen more and more clearly that the minor poet has a mission and an utterance of his own; or, to supply a concrete illustration, that Mr. Dobson is in no sense

a rival of Mr. Swinburne, but rather a worker in different materials, shaping them to different, and, in a way, to equally successful ends.

If this position be well taken, it will follow that there is no reproach in the title of minor poet. We do not think slightingly of the bluebird because it is not an eagle, nor do we wrong the singer of simple lyrics because he has been denied the power to fashion epics or dramatic tragedies. When we

> 'Read from some humbler poet,
> Whose songs gushed from his heart,
> As showers from the clouds of summer,
> Or tears from the eyelids start,'

we are not justified in measuring him by the standard of Milton and Shakespeare, but should rather ask: Does he accomplish what he has sought to accomplish; is there a natural balance between gift and utterance; has he power to stir the springs of emotion at his own spiritual level and upon his own terms? Some years ago, Mr. Slason Thompson published a collection of the minor poetry that, in newspaper and magazine, had appealed to him for a score of

years past. He styled his collection 'The Humbler Poets,' and was in consequence, we believe, the recipient of more than one indignant remonstrance from versifiers who thought themselves anything but humble. But the very fact that a 'humble' or minor poet should be too proud to accept the ascription, proves, as far as it proves anything, that the remonstrant does not deserve the title of poet in any sense, that his aim has been so far mistaken as to make his work relatively a failure.

Speaking of the 'hedgerow poems' of his collection, Mr. Thompson said fittingly: 'There come hours to every lover of poetry when he wishes for "some simple and heartfelt lay," something that shall speak from out a mind feeling the everyday cares of life amid the multitude, and not from the heights to which the masters "proudly stooped."' Something of this feeling, expressed with more of elaboration, and based upon more broadly philosophical grounds, may be found in the preface to 'A Treasury of Minor British Poetry' edited by Mr. J. Churton Collins. Here we are told that:

'It is in the minor poetry of an age that contemporary life impresses itself most deeply, and finds perhaps its most faithful mirror. In the great masterpieces of poetry that life is presented in an ideal light, and in relation to ideal truth. What belongs to a time is subordinated to what belongs to all time, what is actual to what is typical, what is local to what is universal. There is, moreover, in genius of the higher order a dominant, a despotic individuality which tempers and assimilates the material on which it works to its own potent idiosyncracy.'

The author then goes on more specifically to say that in Langland, not Chaucer, 'the England of Edward III. becomes fully articulate,' and that neither Spenser, nor Shakespeare, nor Milton, completely reflects the England of the period in which he lived.

'It is otherwise with the minor poetry of any particular era. Here for the eclecticism, if we may so express it, of the great masters the age itself finds a tongue. For the voice which speaks in these poets is the voice of the nation, of the courtier, of the statesman and man of affairs, of the scholar and litterateur, of the Churchman, of the man of pleasure, of the busy citizen, of the recluse, of the soldier and sailor, of the peasant, of the mechanic, and of women of all classes and of all callings. What is moulding, what is coloring, what is in any way affecting the life of the time has its record here. Is the pulse of the nation quickened or depressed;

are imagination and passion, or fancy and sentiment, or reason and reflection in the ascendant, is the prevailing tendency in the direction of simplicity and nature, or towards ingenuity and art, is the moral tone in society high or low, is the period a period of progress, or of decadence, or of transition,—the answer to all this may be found, and found in detail, in our collections of minor poetry.'

NEWSPAPER SCIENCE.

WALTER BAGEHOT, in one of his letters, speaks of somebody's books as containing 'a pale whitey-brown substance, which people who don't think take for thought, but it isn't.' All of us who do much miscellaneous reading in current literature must come to be painfully familiar with the substance thus described, and to wonder, on the one hand, how it can be evolved from minds that seem to work normally in the everyday relations of life, and, on the other, how it can prove acceptable to the mental palate of so many readers, for many readers there must be to account for its voluminous and continued production. Such an account of the vagaries of intellection as is given by John Fiske, in his essay upon various kinds of 'cranks,' is an amusing thing to read, of course, but in another aspect — an aspect that persists in the field of vision after the humorous one has faded — its effect is saddening, almost disheartening. Cling as tena-

ciously as we may to a belief in the essential rationality of the human intellect, our faith suffers many a rude shock when we see one form after another of irrationalism sweeping over the public mind, threatening almost to its foundations the empire of logic. Illustrations of this power of the irrational to set intellects awry abound on every hand, and may be drawn alike from great things and from small. The irrationality of imagining that our conduct as a nation toward the people of the Philippine Islands can be made to square with the principles upon which we have hitherto shaped our national life and carved out our success is of a piece with the irrationality that claimed the year 1900 for the first of a new century instead of the last of an old one. The former is a matter of grave import to countless millions of people; the latter is a belated bit of scholasticism; both to the psychologist are interesting examples of the way in which pure reason gets flouted when it runs counter either to a passion or a whim.

There was a time, not very long ago, when we hoped great things from our rapidly expanding schemes of education, which were to make

for rationality in so many ways. The teaching of science, particularly, was to raise up a new generation with a new mental habit. The preachers of this gospel said that all our intellectual ailments proceeded from the fatal defect in educational methods that made words rather than things the chief object of attention. Something analogous to the degeneracy of inbreeding was the consequence of the manner in which each new generation was content to deal mainly with the merely verbal inheritance of the past, instead of benefitting by a vivifying contact with the concrete facts of nature. Science was to change all this, to keep men in constant touch with life, leaving the dead past to bury its dead, and henceforth to base all our convictions upon the solid foundations of observation instead of the uncertain indications of authority. Well, science has had pretty much its own way in education for the past quarter-century, yet the generation that it has helped to train seems hardly less prone to superstition than were those that preceded. Such mockeries of the scientific spirit as parade under the names of palmistry and psychical research and 'Christian' science, and

countless other manifestations of the unregulated intellect, rear their heads unabashed, and bear witness to the persistence of the irrational even under conditions that would seem the most adverse to the prosperity of such aberrations of the intelligence.

This flourishing of the unscientific in what is commonly supposed to be peculiarly the age of science is doubtless the result of instincts too deeply seated in the human consciousness to be readily accessible to the appeal of educational and other rationalizing influences. Yet we cannot wholly acquit these influences themselves of all responsibility for a state of things so discreditable to human intelligence. Our educational methods must somehow be defective, must fail in seriousness of application if not in grasp of the problem to be coped with, while those ancillary agencies upon which education has a right to count seem to be far removed indeed from any adequate realization of their high mission. While the church, and the political party, and the industrial organization, and the publisher of books, and the various kinds of purveyors of entertainment to the community, are all in part

answerable for this failure to realize the opportunities offered them to contribute to intellectual advancement, the most conspicuous offender in this respect is that type of the modern newspaper, far too frequently met with, which panders to the lower intellectual instincts quite as noticeably as to the lower social and moral instincts of its readers. We wish to emphasize this distinction just at present because, although many voices have been raised to protest against the low moral tone of the greater part of contemporary journalism, the fact that its intellectual tone is equally low has failed to attract the attention due it as a commentary upon our boasted success in carrying on the work of popular education.

Mr. J. L. Larned, speaking before the librarians at Cleveland a few years ago, made use of these impressive and well-weighed words:

'The common school, making possible readers, and the newspaper inviting them to read, arrived together at a conjunction which might have seemed to be a happy miracle for the universalizing of culture in the western world. The opportunity which came then into the hands of the conductors of the news press, with the new powers that had been given them, has never been paralleled in human history. They might have been gardeners of Eden and planters of a new paradise on the

earth, for its civilization was put into their hands to be made what they would have it to be. If it could have been possible then to deal with newspapers as other educational agencies are dealt with; to invest them with definite moral responsibilities to the public; to take away from them their commercial origin and their mercenary motive; to inspire them with disinterested aims; to endow them as colleges are endowed; to man them for their work as colleges are manned, with learning and tried capacity in the editorial chairs — if that could have been possible, what imaginable degree of common culture might not Europe and America by this time be approaching? As it is, we are to-day disputing and striving to explain to one another a condition of society which shames all who think of it.'

We know now that these things were not possible, although we believe that they may yet become possible, and it is just because we hold this belief that it seems important to emphasize as frequently and as sharply as we may the contrast between what our newspapers are doing for education in the true sense and what they might so easily take it upon themselves to do. And in saying these hard truths of a perverted newspaper press, we wish to give the frankest recognition to those journals, found here and there, whose aims, both intellectual and moral, are entirely creditable to their publishers, and which

are particularly instructive because they indicate the course that others might take to the immense benefit of their prestige, and not impossibly also to the benefit of their subscription and advertising accounts. While it is true that some of the greatest commercial successes in American journalism have been gained by newspapers of the most debased and ruffianly description, it is also true that the most dignified examples of our journalism have proved, if not the most successful, at least suceessful enough to gratify any reasonable ambition. The choice by no means lies between success at the price of decency and failure with the preservation of self-respect.

In order to provide some sort of justification for the title given to these remarks, we must turn from the foregoing abstract considerations to something in the nature of concrete illustration. We all know that 'newspaper science' is a term of reproach, and the reason is not far to seek. The same spirit of sensationalism that leads to the detailed chronicling of a prize fight or a criminal trial leads also to the exploitation of every sort of mental vagary that cloaks itself with the respectable name of science. Whether

it be a belated alchemist who claims to have discovered the stone of the philosophers, or an exponent of the newest and most extravagant occultism, whether it be a palmist or a 'mind-reader' or a 'faith-healer,' whether it be a Shaconian or a circle-squarer, or a pyramid enthusiast or a direful prophet with a tale of the coming destruction of the world, there is no person so scientifically impossible that he cannot get into the newspapers, and enlist their services in the propaganda of his pet eccentricity or insane delusion. He can get himself taken seriously, or at least semi-seriously, and that is what he wants. For all such persons notoriety is the very breath of life, and the newspapers provide it without scruple, because in so doing they can at the same time provide the weak-minded section of their readers with a new variety of mental dissipation. The most incredible inanities, the most preposterous notions, the most meaningless pseudo-science are thus given a currency that is denied even to the genuine achievements of investigation.

This work is done, moreover, in so blundering and hap-hazard a way that the spirit of sensa-

tionalism is not enough completely to account for it. There is usually in addition some admixture of an ignorance so dense that one can only marvel at the number of essentially uneducated people who by some mysterious dispensation get their lucubrations into print. We recall a newspaper article published in Chicago some years ago which undertook to instruct a confiding public upon the subject of ozone. The account was a brief one, but it contrived to include statements to the effect that the true nature of ozone was not fully understood, that it got its name 'from the peculiar odor, which resembles that produced when a succession of electric sparks are passed through the air,' that Faraday considered it 'identical with the medicinal quality in electricity,' that the effect of inhaling it was very 'exhiliatory,' and that M. Jules Verne had once told an interesting 'story of the wild doings in a village which became accidentally permeated' with ozone. This illustration is trivial enough, no doubt, but it is so extremely typical of the sort of 'newspaper science' we are concerned with that it will serve as well as another. The wonder of it is, of course, that any person so

absolutely ignorant of elementary chemistry should write, and that any newspaper should print, so astonishing a farrago of misinformation.

One more illustration must suffice us. An improved method for the liquefaction of air has recently attracted much attention, and the newspapers have naturally taken it up. The same newspaper which was responsible for the remarkable statements about ozone to which reference was just made quotes the inventor as 'stating that with three gallons of the liquid he had repeatedly made ten gallons, and that he could go on doing so for any length of time.' 'There is no reason to doubt this assertion' is the astonishing editorial comment upon this astonishing statement. Now if this means that the energy liberated from the aërification of a certain quantity of the liquefied air is sufficient, without any auxiliary energy, to reduce a still larger quantity to the liquid form, it is the flattest of impossibilities, for it denies the principle of the conservation of energy, which is the fundamental principle upon which all physical science rests. A schoolboy less omniscient than Macaulay's should know such a statement to be impossible, and he should

know it with a firmness of conviction that should make him willing to stake his life upon it. If a schoolboy can get through a common high school education without knowing this and other universal principles of the same order there must have been something radically wrong about his instruction. And it is because we are inclined to think that there often is something radically wrong about the teaching of elementary science, that such teaching is too apt to make information rather than intellectual discipline its chief aim, that we have wished to provide this moral with the sharpest possible of points.

THE DECAY OF AMERICAN JOURNALISM.

THERE is something touching in a 'Letter to Editors and Journalists' put forth by the 'Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends.' It is an appeal for the purification of the newspaper press, and the faith must indeed be abundant that imagines a few soft words sufficient to arouse in the breast of that hardened offender against decency the remorseful twinges of conscience. If the average American journalist ever had such a thing as a conscience, it was killed long ago, and its place taken by a simulacrum of hypocritical accent and leering mien. This effective modern substitute for a conscience in journalism has discovered the secret of preaching virtue in such a manner that it nowise interferes with the practice of vice. It will, for example, devote one editorial column to deploring the brutal tendencies of the age, and fill twenty columns of the same issue with a highly-colored account, from all

possible points of view, of the latest event in the annals of the prize-ring. It will take high moral ground upon the evils of partisanship, and at the same time gloss over the corruption of the party in whose interests its own are wrapped up. It will profess to regret — oh, so deeply — that the dear public has developed so insatiate an appetite for scandalous sensations and vulgar personalities, and will at the same time furnish a large staff of young men with muck-rakes of the most approved pattern, and direct them to gather in as many sensations and personalities as they can discover or invent, in order that the aforesaid dear public may not be deprived of its customary diet, and the sales of its favorite family newspaper show no symptoms of a decline.

Revolutions in taste and in the standards of public decency are no more to be made with rose-water than are revolutions in sterner fields thus to be accomplished. Nothing short of the energetic measures of a Hercules will suffice to cleanse the Augean stables of the 'new journalism,' and we can fancy something of the derision with which the rose-water phrases of the Baltimore friends will be received by the men who

have been chiefly instrumental in making the American newspaper so great a national calamity. 'We appeal to you, as Editors,' so runs the 'Letter' from the good women of the Baltimore Meeting, 'for a reticence in the detail of crime and scandal,—that the purely sensational shall be excluded, that pictures and advertisements, both personal and medical, which so insidiously lead the innocent and unsuspecting from the path of virtue, shall find no place in your columns. We especially ask your influence in raising the moral tone of the edition issued as the "Sunday paper," till it becomes a power for good among the people.' This appeal is reiterated, with some variation of phrase, in a 'Report' which accompanies the 'Letter,' and the pleasant hope is expressed that in our journalism henceforth 'fairer, lovelier paths be traced, leading to virtue and to hope.'

We fear that all the ears that such an appeal as this seeks to reach will be found deaf to its gentle pleadings. The foul sheets at which it aims will continue to do lip-service to whatsoever things are good and pure, while disregarding in practice every consideration of decency. The

effective arguments for purified journalism will be of a very different sort, and indications are not wanting that such arguments are about to be employed. The ringing words of the late Governor Altgeld, setting forth the imperative demand for legislation that will really protect men from wanton assaults upon their character by practically irresponsible editors, found an echo in many minds, and the bills recently introduced into the law-making bodies of Illinois and New York, making it an offence to publish portraits without the consent of the persons portrayed, have taken a step in the right direction. Even the recent New York bill proposing a press-censorship, while unwise in principle, has made a good many people seriously ask themselves whether an excessive measure of restriction might not be preferable to the excess of license which now characterizes the conduct of our newspapers. 'Freedom of the press' has always been, and ought always to remain, a watchword of much meaning to any liberty-loving people, but its force may be greatly weakened by such abuses of that freedom as are daily illustrated by the newspapers of our chief cities. Still more significant than the attempts

at legislation to which reference has been made is the recent action of a number of public libraries and clubs in Eastern cities, excluding from their reading-rooms the most conspicuously objectionable newspapers that are published anywhere in the country. Sometimes a movement like this, once started, grows far more rapidly than might be anticipated, just as crystallization takes place in an over-saturated solution when some rallying-point is offered for the aggregation of the ready molecules. That some such crystallization of sentiment on the subject of American journalism, its duties and its responsibilities, may soon take place is the deep desire of every thinking person who has the interests of this country at heart.

Just as every people has, on the whole, the government that it deserves, so it must be admitted that every city is responsible for the newspapers that it supports, and deserves nothing better until it is prepared actively to repudiate the sheets by which it is represented. It will not do merely to claim that it is misrepresented by them, deploring their dishonesty, their vulgarity of tone, and their pernicious sensationalism, while at the same time giving

them the encouragement of subscriptions and advertising contracts. Nor are any protests likely to avail so long as the man who has acquired wealth in the pursuit of disreputable journalism is permitted to associate with gentlemen, to figure as a leading citizen at public gatherings, to enjoy the freedom of the club and the communion of the church. When the public conscience is sufficiently quickened to recognize the fact that such a man is a moral outcast, that his newspaper pollutes the home, that to purchase it upon the street-corner is a direct encouragement of its vicious practices, and that to use its columns for advertising purposes is to pay too great a price for commercial gain, when these things come to be recognized — not as counsels of perfection but as working maxims for the conduct of daily life — we may hope for a return to the more dignified and decent journalistic methods of the past generation, and for the assimilation of our press to the ethical standards that are upheld as a matter of course in most other parts of the civilized world.

If the time ever comes when those standards shall obtain in American journalism, our news-

paper press will have found its real mission, and may become, what it certainly is not now, a potent agency of enlightenment and a pillar for the support of republican institutions. Intelligent citizens everywhere would be only too glad to look to the newspaper for both light and leading; at present, instead of shedding light, it darkens counsel by words without knowledge, and instead of leading opinion, it is prone to follow the uncertain guidance of every blind popular prejudice and every brutal fanaticism that sways the masses of its readers. Its once considerable influence has so waned that its boasts of power excite only the derision of the well-informed; its pretended statements of fact are so untrustworthy that few people place any confidence in them; its opinions are not taken seriously because nobody supposes that they are reached by a process of serious reasoning. If a newspaper of the typical sort perchance champion a good cause, few will be found to believe in the sincerity of its attitude, for its championship of bad causes has long since made it an object of suspicion, if not of contempt.

The darkest hour is that which just precedes

the dawn, and perhaps the dawn of a purified journalism is nearer at hand than we suppose. The legal maxim that wherever there is a grievance there is a remedy may prove valid in the wider ethical field wherein this foe must be grappled with. Whether the remedy come from within or without, whether it be an organic process of regeneration or a surgical operation does not matter so much; what does matter is the undeniable fact that many of the newspapers published in our large cities are so devoid of principle that they constitute a perpetual menace to every genuine interest of our civilization. We need not single out those journals that stand as honorable exceptions to this general statement, nor those other journals that are kept from the state of grace by weakness rather than by will; their editors and their friends will know that these remarks are not meant for them. But no words of condemnation can be too strong for the newspapers that subordinate all other aims to the aim of enlarging their circulation and their advertising patronage, that care nothing for the truth and only enough for decency to keep out of the clutches of the criminal law. There is no more

important work to be done for our civilization to-day than that of shaming such newspapers either out of existence or into amended lives, and the responsibility for that work is shared by all alike.

THE STAR SYSTEM IN PUBLISHING.

A FEW years ago complaint was made, in accents more or less querulous, of the fact that the books which had the largest sale and enjoyed the widest popularity in this country were novels by English writers. The American novelist seemed to have no chance at all in the competition with his trans-atlantic rival. One of the chief arguments by which the campaign for international copyright had been brought to a successful issue was that the American novelist occupied a disadvantageous position in his own country, because publishers would naturally give preference over his work to that of the English novelist who was not in the position to exact a royalty. The plea was a sound one, and there is no doubt that for many years American novelists, as well as American writers in other departments of letters, were put at a considerable disadvantage by the fact that publishers of predatory instincts (and such were not lacking) might seize upon whatever English

books they wished, and reproduce them without the leave of either authors or proprietors. As between an already successful English novel upon which no royalty need be paid, and an American manuscript which might or might not make a successful book and for which the author would certainly demand compensation, the balance of probable profit turned toward the side of piracy, and the American writer who had not already conquered his public found it difficult to obtain a hearing. At last, however, the law was passed which accorded the bare measure of justice (or something less than that) to the English author, and placed the American author in a position to compete with him without being handicapped from the start.

In some respects the working of the law proved disappointing. The cheap 'libraries,' it is true, found their opportunities restricted, and many of them disappeared altogether from the market. But the anticipated 'boom' in American literature was slow in appearing. English books that were worth reading, as well as those that were not, seemed to find their way into our houses almost as readily as before, although it

was no longer possible to purchase the latest production of Mr. Black or Mr. Hardy for a small fraction of a dollar. Such books now came to us in respectable garb, and were sold at a fair price. The point is that they continued to come and to be sold in large numbers. Even our popular magazines continued their practice of contracting for the serial rights in works of English fiction, instead of offering that encouragement to home industry about which American novelists had raised such a clamor. There continued to be years in which nearly every one of our story magazines had for its principal feature the novel of some English writer, offered to readers upon the instalment plan. There were the stories of Mr. Kipling, for example, and the romances of Robert Louis Stevenson, with which no American writer of fiction could hope to compete. Then there was the series of highly successful individual books, beginning with 'Robert Elsmere' and coming down in rapid succession to 'Trilby' and 'The Christian.' The dear public wanted these books, even if it had to pay roundly for them; and those who had expected international copyright to effect a revolution in

popular taste found that conditions remained very much as they had been before. These selfish grounds were not, of course, those upon which the serious advocates of that act of plain international duty rested their case, but they no doubt had considerable influence in securing its adoption.

The conditions of a few years ago seem, however, to have become completely changed of late, and American fiction seems at last to have come to its own. The most striking fact in the publishing business of a certain recent year is that of the extraordinary success of a few novels by American writers. Five such novels have won the public favor to such an extent that their sale has broken nearly all recent records, that to find its match, in the case of American fiction at least, we must go back to the history of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' That this success has been in all cases deserved, we are by no means willing to admit. Of the five novels in question, one is a homely character-study having for its passport to favor a plentiful supply of mother-wit rather than an effective plot. The other four are historical romances. One of these four, the work

of a woman, deserves very high praise as representing the best type of historical fiction. Two of the others are at least admirable narratives, and present interesting phases of our colonial history with remarkable sympathy, industrious grasp of detail, and vivid dramatic force. The fourth is an extremely mediocre example of the class of work to which it belongs, common in both style and treatment, not noticeably better or worse than a score of other books of its sort published during the twelvemonth, and chiefly interesting as an illustration of what can be done for a poor book by shrewd and persistent advertising. On the whole, our cause for satisfaction in the success of these five novels is not so great as those who are interested in them would have us believe, and the record of their sales is a brilliant episode in the history of American bookselling rather than in the history of American literature.

Whether the publishing trade is really to be congratulated upon such a series of popular successes as this, is open to serious doubt. In one case, at least, the profits accruing from a sale of hundreds of thousands of copies could not avail

to save a great and long-established house from serious business embarrassments. Such enormous sales of single books, of which the merit, even if great, is not likely to be fairly proportional to the sales, does not seem to us to betoken an altogether healthy condition of the publishing trade. Publishers themselves know well enough that their success in the long run depends, not upon the fortunate acquisition of an occasional book that enjoys a sky-rocket career, but upon the possession of a substantial list of works of permanent value, works that occupy a standard place in literature and may be depended upon to provide a steady income for many years. The publisher who has a list of this sort is, of course, glad enough to get hold of an exceptionally successful novel from time to time; such a book represents to him so much clear gain, and he would not be human did he fail to keep an intelligent watch for productions of this sort. But if he allows his head to be turned by visions of this kind of luck, if he despises the more modest but safer ventures, if he bends his energies toward achieving an abnormal sale for a few books instead of a normal sale for many, he is likely to

come to grief. His real interests lie in the possession of many claims to public esteem rather than in the making of a few successful appeals to popular caprice.

It seems to us that there is an evident analogy between the ideal of publishing that aims to push a few books into successful acceptance and the ideal of theatrical or operatic management which depends almost exclusively upon the popularity of a few artists. The star system in stage affairs has long been understood by all competent observers as being extremely demoralizing to the true interests of art. The recent history of our grand opera has brought this principle home to many who had not realized it before. A few singers and a few operas become established in public favor, and the short-sighted policy of the management, relying upon this fact, gathers for the time a rich harvest. But presently the public wearies of its favorites, and, never having been educated to the point of healthy musical culture which can find interest and inspiration in a great variety of works, never having been made to feel that the works themselves and not the manner of their performance should be its chief concern,

now deserts the opera-house, in spite of all the allurements of new voices and new productions. The management then complains that audiences have no taste for a varied repertoire, that the production of untried compositions spells financial disaster. Of course it does: the public should have been prepared for these compositions long before; they should have been produced repeatedly, even at some temporary loss, at the time when the public was most clamorous for the sensations of the hour. The star system in publishing brings about very similar results. Many worthy books are neglected in order that a few may be kept well to the front. When the caprice is past, when the serried ranks of worn copies of 'Trilby' gather dust upon the shelves of the public library, when the unsold copies in the hands of the publisher and bookseller become 'plugs,' the publisher should then know better than to complain because his other books do not sell. The fact often is that he has not tried to sell them, that he has left them unadvertised and uncared-for, that they have now lost their chance because his 'enterprise' has seen fit to promote the sale of a few

books at the expense of all the rest. The well-advised publisher, in our opinion, is the one who recognizes the evils of the star system, and is not misled by its promise of present temporary gain. He is the publisher who secures for his list as many books of lasting value as he can. And he is the publisher who cares for the interest of all of his books, because he understands that the permanent success of his business depends upon the acceptability of his total output rather than upon the vogue of a few books taken here and there from his catalogue.

THE YOUNG PERSON.

It is a well-known principle of pathology that interference with the normal activity of an organ results in functional perversion. The atrophy that follows upon the disuse of one organ may have for a concomitant the excessive development of others, with some form of degeneration as a consequence; or the over-stimulation of one may be accompanied by a weakening of all the others, leading in the end to dissolution. In either case, whether the disturbing physiological factor take the shape of a forced activity here or a suppressed activity there, the result is some development of distinctly morbid type. Now the analogies between the organism of the individual and the larger social organism are always instructive, if philosophically dealt with, and the thought of the past thirty or forty years has been particularly fruitful in applications of this method of comparison. The whole modern science of sociology, for example, may be described as an

expansion of this fundamental idea, and gets its most trustworthy results from the intelligent discussion of these analogies. It is our purpose just now to apply to one aspect of literary activity the method in question, and to ask if it may not have some instruction for the critic of contemporary literature.

That reverence is due to the young is one of the most venerable of critical maxims. It has been knocking about in literature ever since it became embalmed in one of the satires of Juvenal, and perhaps for longer than that. It has very noticeably influenced the literary production of the present century, but it has not always been wisely apprehended and applied. Let us take a moment to see what has been done with this precept in the case of the two greatest literatures of our time — the French and the English. In both instances there has been at work a subconscious instinct that has sought to keep from the contemplation of youthful minds certain parts of human life and certain phases of human emotion. But the instinct has worked itself out in curiously different ways. French books have become sharply differentiated into books for the

Young Person and books for the full-grown man or woman. English books, on the other hand, have nearly all been written, until very lately, with the Young Person carefully in view, and, it would often seem, without any consideration for any other class of readers. These two theories, carried to extremes, have been productive of the most ludicrous results, exemplified, in the one case, by the school-girl editions of 'Télémaque' which carefully substitute *amitié* for *amour*; in the other, by such an anecdote as has recently gone the rounds of the newspapers, revealing the fact that a popular magazine of wide circulation in this country does not permit any mention of wine to be made in its pages. And both of these theories, even when kept within bounds, seem to us to have led to an abnormal condition of things in the literatures that have respectively practised them.

We all know Matthew Arnold's hard saying about the French people — that they have devoted themselves to the worship of the great goddess of lubricity. This remark was never meant to be taken without qualification, as many passages of Arnold's critical works show plainly

enough. It may be sufficient to instance his judgment of George Sand, pronounced upon hearing of her death. 'She was the greatest spirit in our European world from the time that Goethe departed. With all her faults and Frenchisms, she was this.' The warmest admirers of that woman of genius will feel that something more than justice is done her by this bit of eulogy, but they will also feel that the man who uttered it must have had strong grounds for what harsh things he at times felt bound to say about modern French literature. That literature doubtless gives undue prominence to one particular form of passion, and doubtless sins against the proprieties more frequently and more conspicuously than any literature ought to do. To revert to the pathological figure of our introductory paragraph, French literature seems, in its treatment of the relations of the sexes, to have suffered a sort of fatty degeneration, and erotic *pâtés de foie* have entered too largely into the daily diet of its consumers. It seems to us quite clear that one of the causes of this abnormal development must be sought for in an unnatural separation of books for the

Young Person from books for the Gallic adult. Since (in theory, at least) the Young Person is never supposed to see the books written for his elders, there is no need of writing them *virginibus puerisque*, and all restraint and all reticence are thrown to the winds.

The English theory, of course, has been as far removed from the French theory as possible. Taking for granted that the Young Person is quite as likely as anybody else to read a book of any sort, all books (broadly speaking) have been written with his needs and limitations in view, and the result has been an emasculated literature, from which discussion of certain subjects has been excluded by as effective a taboo as was ever practised among the South Sea islanders. Newspaper cant and the censorship of the circulating libraries have so narrowed the scope of nineteenth-century English literature that the future student of Victorian manners and morals will have to go outside of literature to get the facts in proper perspective. These remarks apply with equal force to the English literature produced upon our own side of the Atlantic. The suppression of natural literary activity thus indicated has been

correcting itself of late, and in the usual violent way. Unless atrophy has gone so far as to prove fatal, nature usually contrives to reassert herself, and throws the whole organism into disorder by so doing. The last few years have brought realism and plain-speaking back into English literature, and with a vengeance. The dovecotes of hypocrisy have been fluttered by ominous birds of prey, and the sober-minded, who have all along viewed with apprehension the attempt to keep English literature in a straight-jacket, have stood alternately amused and aghast at the antics with which it has celebrated its newly-acquired liberty.

The problem is certainly a vexatious one. The example of one nation shows us the bad effects of ignoring the Young Person; the example of another furnishes an instructive lesson in the consequences of deferring to him overmuch. Unbounded license is an unquestionable evil; the cramping of ideals, on the other hand, leads to a reaction almost equally evil. Whether the one course be pursued or the other, freedom of literary expression will find its stout champions, as it has already found them in both countries,

from Molière to Mr. Swinburne. We do not want a revival of eighteenth century grossness. Mr. Gosse says, in a recent critique, that with Mr. Hardy's latest novel 'we have traced the full circle of propriety. A hundred and fifty years ago, Fielding and Smollett brought up before us pictures, used expressions, described conduct, which appeared to their immediate successors a little more crude than general reading warranted. In Miss Burney's hands, and in Miss Austen's the morals were still further hedged about. Scott was even more daintily reserved. We came at last to Dickens, where the clamorous passions of mankind, the coarser accidents of life, were absolutely ignored, and the whole question of population seemed reduced to the theory of the gooseberry bush. This was the *ne plus ultra* of decency; Thackeray and George Eliot relaxed this intensity of prudishness; once on the turn, the tide flowed rapidly, and here is Mr. Hardy ready to say any mortal thing that Fielding said, and a great deal more too.'

Fortunately, we are not yet forced to take 'Jude the Obscure' as typical of our century and literature, although the atrocious faults of taste

displayed by that book do not stand alone to represent their class. And we cannot agree with Mr. Gosse in saying that to censure such outspokenness 'is the duty of the moralist and not the critic.' If criticism has any most imperative duty, it is precisely the one so airily disclaimed by this self-constituted spokesman for the craft. And there is not much palliation for such an offence as Mr. Hardy's in the prefatory danger-signal which describes the book as 'a novel addressed by a man to men and women of full age.' This is the French theory over again, and might be used to cloak all of the French excesses. It seems to us that the real solution of the problem presented by the Young Person must take the form of a compromise, and that a compromise is possible that shall mean neither a loss of virility in literature nor the exposure of the immature to corrupting influences. We need, first of all, to clear our minds of cant on the subject of the supposed ignorance of the Young Person. The Frenchman knows perfectly well that his theory does not work, and that boys and girls read the books they are not supposed to read. The Englishman knows equally well that his theory

works no better, and that boys and girls who do not get a knowledge of life from literature get it in other and usually worse ways. Why should we not admit right away that our education is not as frank as it ought to be? With this admission we might couple the plea, on the one hand, for less prudishness than we have been accustomed to put into books likely to fall into the hands of the Young Person; while sternly insisting, on the other hand, that all literature should be clean, that grossness is a thing unpardonable in itself, and not merely for its degrading influence upon a certain possible class of readers. Some such middle ground as this should be found safe for all the interests concerned; it should result in a literature both strengthened and purified, not losing from view the needs of the Young Person, but rather according them a more rational consideration than they have had hitherto.

THE NEW PATRIOTIC IMPULSE.

A GREAT deal has been said, during the past few years, about the rekindling of American patriotism that has resulted from the war with Spain and its *sequelæ*. We are once more a united people, and we stand together in the defence of the national honor, and new glories have been won for the American flag, and we have taken our proper place among the great powers, and our manifest destiny has again declared itself in the impressive deeds by which the triumph of our arms has been accomplished. The changes have been rung upon all the familiar phrases of political oratory, gold and pinchbeck alike, and flamboyant boastings from every quarter of the land have convinced men only too willing to be persuaded that our feet were indeed planted upon 'glory-crowned heights.' The emotions to which explosive vent has been given are, no doubt, sincere enough to deserve a certain measure of respect, even from those who know how hollow

in reality the most resonant phrases may be, and how recklessly the political rhetorician will indulge in sentiments to which the whole tenor of his career gives the lie. But thinking men have never been content, in America or elsewhere, to accept at their face value the counters of the politician. As was recently said in 'The Nation,' 'in the case of such men, the proposed sentiments of humanity and morality really count for nothing at all. They regard them merely as mouth-filling phrases, which sound well and please their constituents; and never dream that they will one day return to plague them, or that anybody will think of holding them to their own professions.' And whether such sentiments come from some high official like the war-lord of Washington, or from the most servile henchman of a political party having at bottom no nobler motive than party advantage and no higher aim than plunder, their ring is false, and will deceive only those who wish to be deceived.

The new patriotic impulse to which we here wish to call attention finds no illustrations in the noisy plaudits of those who din daily into our ears the catchwords of duty and destiny — the

duty of advancing civilization by fire and sword, the destiny which may only be asserted by denying to alien peoples the fundamental rights of man. Rather do we hear through all this din the accents of a still small voice recalling to us that our true duties lie close at hand, and that the national destinies wrought out for us by Washington and Jefferson and Lincoln are absolutely incompatible with our new-fangled dreams of empire. And because this voice, which is no other than the voice of the national conscience, has not breathed out its protest unheeded, but has found so many fearless spokesmen, filled with passion for the ideals that all true Americans have cherished hitherto, and thrilling with indignation at the present desecration of those ideals, it has seemed to us that this new manifestation of the spirit of the finer patriotism is a most noteworthy phenomenon, not to be paralelled more than two or three times in the whole course of our history. In behalf of this protest against the abandonment of the principles by which our moral stature as a nation has hitherto been determined, there has been enlisted, in the words of ex-Governor George S. Boutwell, 'an

array of names such as has not been brought together in support of a common cause since the signing of the Declaration of independence.' So many are these names, and so great is their influence as leaders of both thought and action, that we shall not attempt the invidious task of singling out a few for special mention. A score or more of them will occur at once to the mind of any well-informed reader, and every fair critic must admit that they represent an overwhelming preponderance of the intelligence and morality of our fellow-citizens.

The attempt of a time-serving press to attach to these names the stigma of treason is one that falls with the weight of its own absurdity. Their position is exactly that of Chatham and Burke in opposing another war of subjugation over a hundred years ago. It is for the courage of their attitude in resisting a perverse and short-sighted colonial policy that those men are held in the highest honor by Englishmen and Americans alike. The verdict of history metes out even justice to the men who in any age withstand the outbursts of popular folly; and who can doubt that, in our own present case, when 'the tumult

and the shouting dies,' the leaders who now, at no small cost of temporary popularity, stand for the principles of the Fathers of our Government, and speak for 'the mighty hopes that make us men' in a sense unknown to European history, will be adjudged by no remote posterity to have won for themselves a crown of exceeding great glory. Whatever may be the outcome of the struggle to preserve for this nation the ideals upon which its true grandeur has been based —whether our ship of state reach its haven or suffer shipwreck — the honor of these men is secure. They have fought the good fight, and history will set them high among the heroes of our race. In a certain sense, the judgment of history is already pronounced. What history says of any age is determined largely by what the most forceful minds of that age have said of its issues. The men who are to-day speaking to us with the authority of experience and ripened political wisdom are the men to whom the historian of the future will turn for light, just as we now turn for light upon the history of our Revolutionary struggle to the living words of Burke and Chatham, of Washington and Jefferson.

These considerations bring us to the more special subject of the present discussion. We Americans have a great wealth of political literature, for our bent toward the discussion of problems of statecraft is as marked as was that of the Athenians. Much of this literature is mere volubility, and whatever heat it once had has long since become dissipated. But the best of this literature is still a living force, for it deals with the most vital features of our polity, and its interest remains perennial. When we survey the cherished masterpieces of our political writing — its eloquent oratory and its calm intellectual appeal — we find that they centre about two great themes — the struggle for independence and a national union, and the struggle to preserve that union and make it stand for freedom in the largest meaning, for the equality of all men in the sight of the law. It is this latter aspect of the secular conflict which now again confronts us, and the cause at issue makes upon us a demand no less imperious than the demand that was made upon an earlier generation by the harsh pretensions of the English crown, and upon a later one by the arrogant pretensions of the slave-owning oligarchy. He

must be blind indeed who does not see that the same essential principles are now again at stake, and that the outcome of the present deplorable situation is fraught with the same enormous possibilities for good or for evil.

In this serious condition of affairs, our writers have not been found wanting, and it is with the deepest satisfaction that we call attention to the way in which they have risen to the high occasion offered them. There is growing up about the present subject of contention a mass of literature which is conceived in accordance with the noblest traditions of American thought. Even in mere bulk it is already almost comparable with the literature inspired by opposition to the institution of slavery, and in quality it is no whit inferior, either in its impassioned earnestness or in its deep resolve to maintain to the death those standards of justice and human right that so many seem now to be weakly forsaking. The thought which infuses all this writing is indeed that which

> 'Helped our fathers' souls to live,
> And bids the waning century bloom anew.'

It is the thought of men too sturdy in their Americanism to be swept away from their moor-

ings by the gusts of partisan folly, and too sure that they are right to be influenced by any array of hostile numbers. It is the thought of men each one of whom would be content to stand with serene conscience an *Athanasius contra mundum*, each one of whom would reëcho the 'Ultima Verba' of Victor Hugo,

> 'Sans chercher à savoir et sans considérer
> Si quelqu'un a plié qu'on aurait cru plus ferme,
> Et si plusieurs s'en vont qui devraient demeurer.'

The defenders of our latter-day imperialism have not yet come to understand the temper of this opposition to their reckless course. They treat it as a difference of opinion, but it is nothing of the sort. Men may have opinions about such matters as the tariff and the currency, but the proposition to cast aside the doctrines of the Constitution and the Declaration, the counsels of Washington and Lincoln, the sanctions of free government that have been inculcated upon Americans from their earliest childhood — this proposition runs counter to the most sacred convictions of all men to whom Americanism is more than an empty name.

Let us enumerate a few — a very few — of

the writings that have responded to this wild onslaught upon the principles that make the American name dear to us. There are the lectures and addresses contained in President Jordan's 'Imperial Democracy,' a volume which is a complete arsenal of fact and argument. There are such papers as 'The Present Crisis,' by Edwin D. Mead; 'Our Nation's Peril,' by Dr. Lewis G. Janes; 'Imperialism, and the Tracks of Our Forefathers,' by Mr. Charles Francis Adams; 'England in 1776: America in 1899,' by Mr. William M. Salter; and 'The Conquest of the United States by Spain,' by Professor William G. Sumner. There are such speeches as those of Senator Hoar in Congress, of Mr. Carl Schurz in Chicago and elsewhere, of Professor Charles Eliot Norton at the Ashfield Dinner. There are such fugitive writings as the 'Open Letter' from ex-Senator Henderson, and 'The Philippine Piracy,' by Professor William James. There are innumerable other contributions to this literature of protest and warning, offered by such men as President Eliot, Professor von Holst, Bishop Henry C. Potter, Bishop John L. Spaulding, Professor Felix Adler, and the Rev.

Henry Van Dyke. Now, of all this literature it is not enough to say that it cannot be ignored. Much of it is so admirable in form, besides being suffused with the lasting qualities of fine intelligence and exalted emotion, that it is sure of preservation among the most noteworthy examples of American patriotic eloqence. The future student and compiler of such literature will be justified in placing Senator Hoar's great speech beside Webster's reply to Hayne, and Professor Sumner's Phi Beta Kappa address beside the finest efforts of his great namesake. One reads these masterly productions with the same glow of feeling that is inspired by the traditional models of our eloquence, and the youth of the future will take from them the same contagion of enthusiasm which our generation has caught from their old-time prototypes. Their present value is that they strengthen our faith in the potency of our cherished ideals, and bid us take heart for our country however dark the present outlook. What to the faint-hearted may seem one sweeping *dégringolade* of principles and institutions cannot, after all, be a reality as long as such voices as these are raised to recall us to the old paths of

national virtue and sobriety. 'This spasm of folly and delusion also, in my judgment, will surely pass by,' are among the closing words of Senator Hoar's memorable speech. And what true American should not be proud to echo the words that follow: 'Whether it passes by or not, I thank God I have done my duty, and that I have adhered to the great doctrines of righteousness and freedom, which I learned from my fathers, and in whose service my life has been spent.'

Such a literature as this makes us almost glad that the occasion for it has arisen. The awakening from our fancied security has been rude, and the perils to which we are exposed have become imminent; but we now know, at least, that the voices that were raised in past crises of our national life have found worthy successors, and that the torch has been handed on still aflame. The poets, indeed, we sadly miss, although Mr. William Vaughn Moody, with his 'Ode in Time of Hesitation,' has risen nobly to the occasion. We know well with what prophetic fire our Whittier, were he now alive, would arouse our sluggish conscience, and our Lowell scourge with the scorpion whip of his indigna-

tion the traducers of our national character. But the words of the poets have this advantage over all common words, that they apply to other times and places than those by which they are immediately occasioned, and neither 'Ichabod' nor the 'Biglow Papers" could in reality be bettered for our present needs. What, in fact, could a Lowell now say that would be more exactly to the point than these familiar stanzas, and the note by which they are supplemented:

'We were gittin' on nicely up here to our village,
With good old idees o' wut's right an' wut aint,
We kind o' thought Christ went agin war an' pillage,
An' thet eppyletts worn't the bestm ark of a saint;
But John P.
Robinson he
Sez this kind o' thing's an exploded idee.

'The side of our country must ollers be took,
An' President Polk, you know, *he* is our country.
An' the angel that writes all our sins in a book
Puts the *debit* to him, and to us the *per contry*;
And John P.
Robinson he
Sez this is his view o' the thing to a T.'

'Our country is bounded on the north and the south, on the east and the west, by Justice, and when she oversteps that invisible boundary-line by so much as a hair's-breadth,

she ceases to be our mother, and chooses to be looked upon *quasi noverca.* That is a hard choice when our earthly love of country calls upon us to tread one path and our duty points us to another. We must make as noble and becoming an election as did Penelope between Icarius and Ulysses. Veiling our faces, we must take silently the hand of Duty to follow her.'

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